No. 912
Friday
29 Nov. '96

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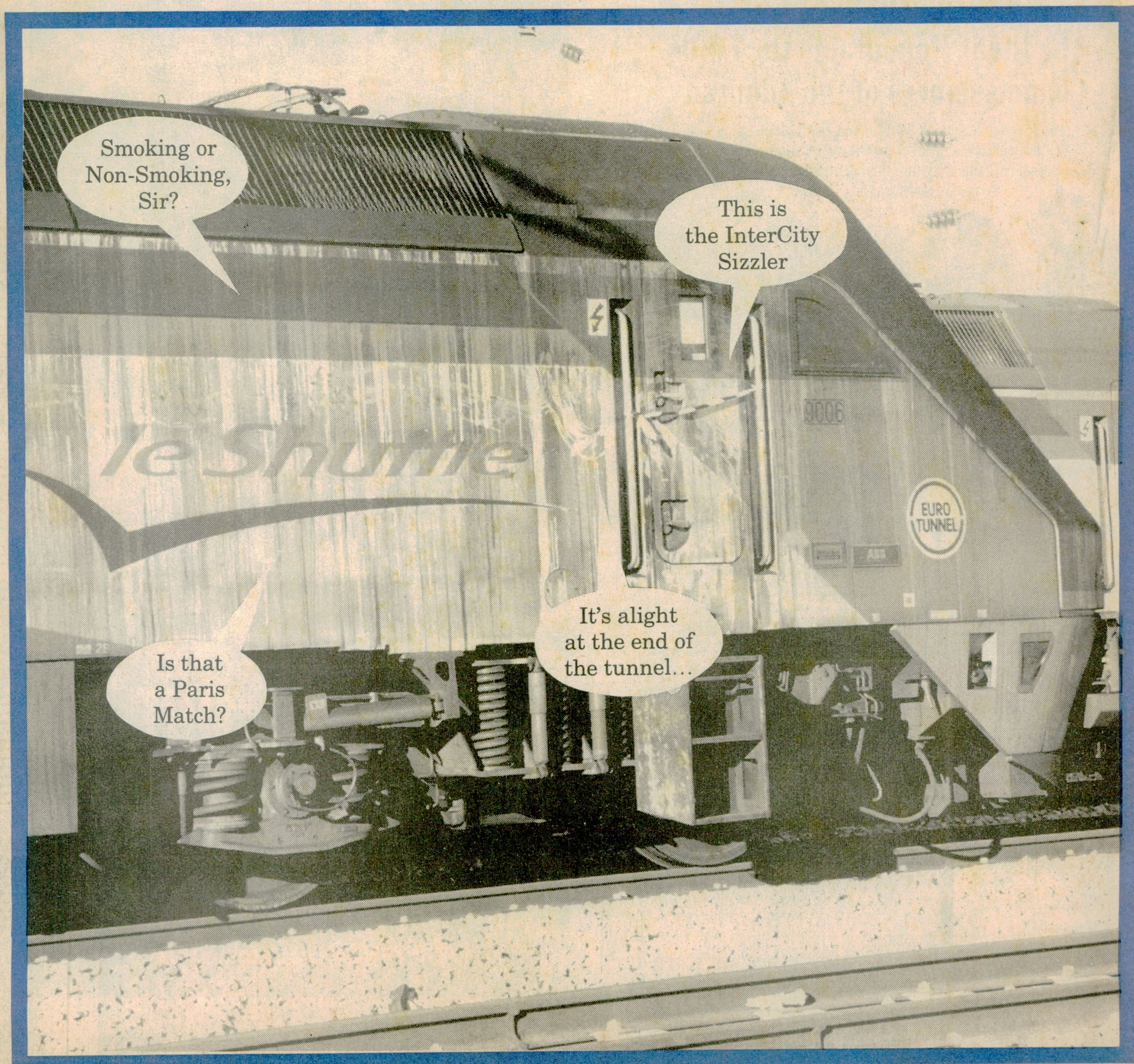
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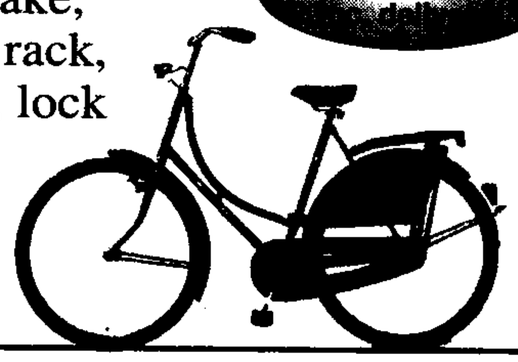

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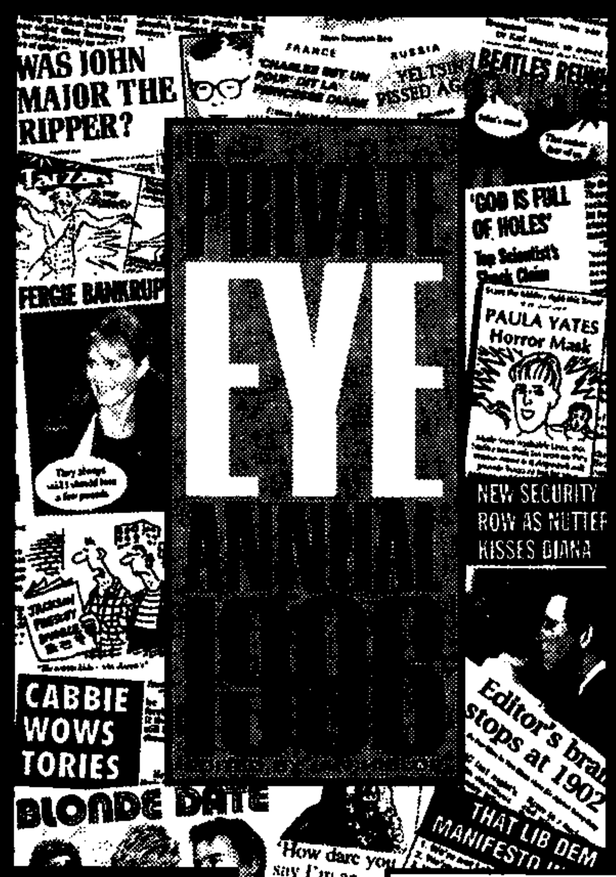

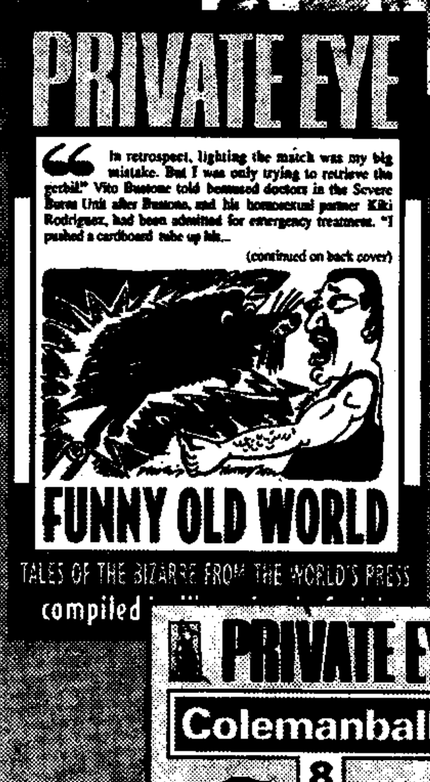
PRIVATE EYE
In retrospect, lighting the match was my big mistake. But I was only trying to retrieve the gerbil" Vito Bastone told bemused doctors in the Severe Burns Unit after Bastone, and his homosexual partner Kiki Rodriguez, had been admitted for emergency treatment. "I pushed a cardboard tube up his...
(continued on back cover)
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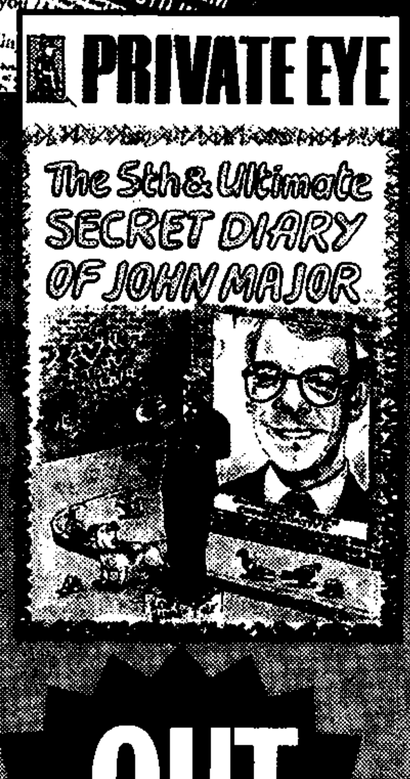

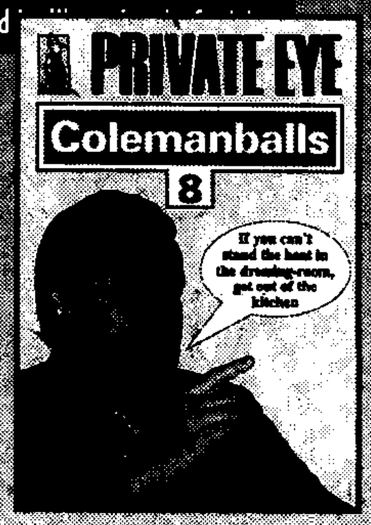

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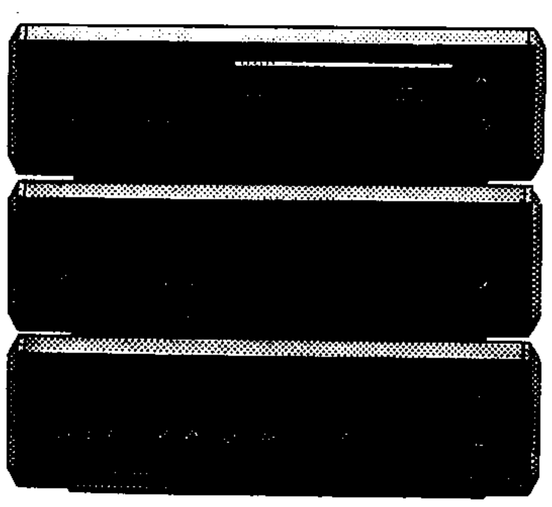

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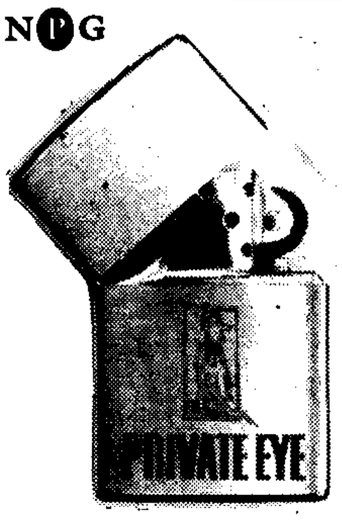

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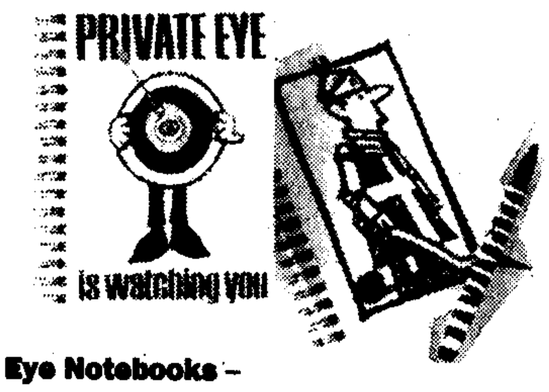

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Gnome

IT IS almost miraculous. A plane is hijacked and crashes into the Indian Ocean. 123 people are killed. Yet amazingly amongst the survivors are two good-looking blondes. And they are both British.

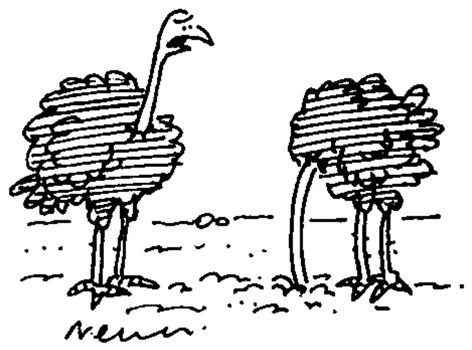
When the news broke, hardened newspapermen like myself could not hold back their tears of joy.

It was a lucky escape for all of us in the newspaper world. Faced with a dull story about foreigners dying, or — even worse — having to revert to a picture of the Chancellor holding up the familiar briefcase, it could so easily have been a disaster.

But now amongst the wreckage of our newspapers these two blonde women have struggled bravely onto the front pages.

There are times even in this cynical business when one begins to believe in divine intervention.

E. Strobes
pp Lord Gnome
Lourdes
France



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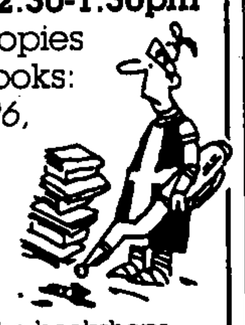

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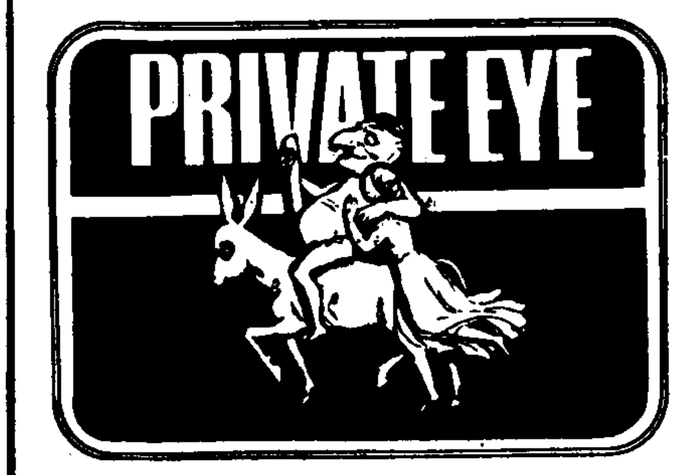

CHRISTMAS PRESENTS! Why not give a subscription? See back cover for details and Private Eye's own Christmas cards.

COLUMN SECTION

THE danger of an undersea disaster was anticipated, not least by the *Eye*.

The safety measures were forced through under pressure to save time and money. The safety authority shrouded itself in secrecy. Its proceedings have never been published (only edited reports have been issued). And data of safety trials have not been published even in the scientific and technical press.

One of the most qualified critics is Dr Herbert Eisner, former director of the government's Flame and Explosion Laboratory. He now reiterates criticisms which we reported as long ago as 1991 (see "Safety belt-up", 2 August 1991). "The tunnel was designed in a ridiculous manner, in a piecemeal manner. Eurotunnel put up schemes and the Safety Authority had to consider them bit by bit.

"The Safety Authority was put under pressure. It was faced with decisions which had already been taken; the wagons were designed and ordered before getting safety clearance and the tunnel itself was built before it had solved the earthquake problem. They rushed the whole thing and then the commission had to argue if it wanted to change expensive plans."

In this, he is supported by Stephen Plowden, transport economist and urban affairs planner, who says: "It is clear that commercial pressures were too prevalent."

The big question that hangs over the project now is what would happen if a fire occurred in a coach filled with cars and coaches and their passengers. Dr Eisner has always argued that passengers should be separated from their vehicles, as they are on ferries. He says the only reason passengers are required to stay in their cars is "to ensure rapid train turnaround and consequent high revenue".

In the event of fire in a carriage, Halon gas will be used to fight it. "If Halon is discharged into a fire, you get very toxic products. It would have quite horrible consequences. It cannot be used while people are there," Dr Eisner argues.

He is supported by Dr John Adams, reader in geography at University College, London, who told the *Eye* (see "The hole truth," October 27 1989) that it cannot be released when passengers are present. His warning has been reinforced by the chaos that followed last week's fire: in theory, all the passengers would have to be led through the smoke, out of the carriage, before the Halon could be released. Tell that to the lorry drivers.

FOR Eurotunnel, the fire in the Channel tunnel may yet come to be seen as a blessing — albeit a heavily disguised one for the moment — if it provides a credible explanation for the company going into liquidation.

Eurotunnel has been trading with an impossible burden of debt and has little chance of meeting even its interest payments out of income, let alone repaying the capital and providing dividends for the wretched shareholders.

Now, however, less than three weeks after the departure of founding father Sir Alastair Morton, a fire changes everything. Revenue will be cut; repairs will cost millions; the train operator Eurostar will sue it into the ground — and everyone will understand if poor Eurotunnel throws in its hand and admits that circumstances have beaten it.

In fact for several years it has had little chance of finding a viable future. The increase in costs, from £4.8 billion to £8.5 billion, meant it was doomed to trade at a loss if it was to pay interest on its debt. Its shares, once at £11, fell to 86p after the fire and those of the ferry operators P&O rose. But it is the ferries which will be hardest hit if the Channel tunnel is taken over by the banks and can operate free from debt. It will then be able to cut its prices to meet running costs alone, and the ferries will be scuppered.

HAPPILY Robert Malpas, the man who became co-chairman of Eurotunnel on 1 November (the fire followed on 17 November), is well used to disaster.

His first experience of a major public upset came in 1987 when he was managing director of British Petroleum. It was privatised with the sale of £7.22 billion worth of government shares. Alas, the market collapsed the next week and the company was nearly taken over by Kuwait. To save it, BP had to buy back its shares for £2.4 billion giving the Kuwaitis a profit of £400 million.

Mr Malpas then left BP the following year with a compensation package of 260,000 option shares at a knockdown price, and moved to PowerGen as chairman, to preside over its privatisation. Alas, once again, all did not go smoothly. Mr Malpas fell out with his colleagues (a close clan from the old Central Electricity Generating Board). He blandly suggested they should burn more oil to make electricity (buying it from BP, of course). But he failed to clear his thoughts with his new colleagues before uttering them in public; he opposed a plan to sell the company to Hanson and he clashed with the then energy secretary John Wakeham. The old CEGB hands and Wakeham staged a boardroom coup — and out he went.

Malpas was already a director of Eurotunnel and in line to succeed Morton as co-chairman.

IT READS like a fairy story come true: with just a week to go before the pre-election budget day, the treasury was able, and happy, to announce that it raised £4.4 billion more in tax revenue than it spent last month. What luck — and what a coincidence at just such a moment.

Who compiles the figures? The treasury, in association with the Office of National Statistics (ONS), said a treasury spokesman. And who audits them? "I am not sure, technically, to be honest," the spokesman said. "Ask the ONS."

And the ONS said: "The public sector borrowing requirement is not subject to the normal auditing that a business would go through because it is a statistical measure, not an accounting measure. It is not a normal set of accounts." Hmm.

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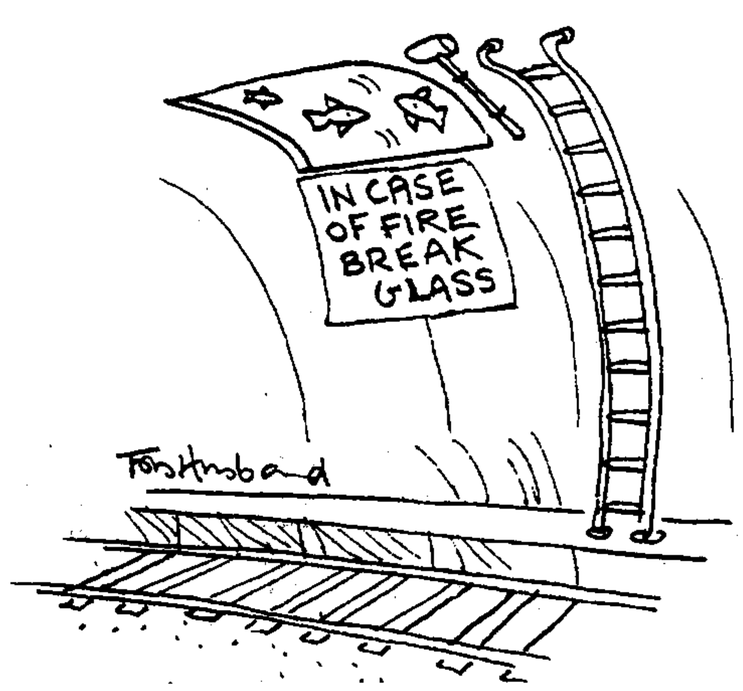


Street Of Shame

***EXPRESS* editor Richard Addis has made a complete hash of trying to fire his deputy, Ian Monk.**

This follows the humiliating public exposure of Monk's wife, Anita, who was arrested for trying to sell a bootleg copy of Allan Starkie's *Fergie: Her Secret Life* to the *Sun*.

The cash-strapped *Express*, desperate to spoil the *Mail* serialisation, spent £20,000 obtaining *two* copies of the book: one from New York and another from Helsinki, where it was printed. After the *Express* ran its three-page spoiler, police arrested Anita Monk at Heathrow on suspicion of "theft and handling stolen property". Ian Monk loyally claimed he hadn't known what his wife was up to, and has continued to heap all the blame on her.

Nevertheless Addis promised other executives, who loathe the bullying Monk, that he would be departing immediately. He ordered Monk to stay at home — but his deputy simply ignored the command and kept coming in to work. Last weekend Addis, before vanishing to Dorset, ordered number three Chris Williams to come in on his day off and edit on Sunday. But Monk turned up too and proceeded to edit despite Williams's bleats of protest.

Even Monk's enemies admit he has played a blinder: weeping to some colleagues, begging help from others and denying that he had massive gambling debts.

Lord "Alco" Hollick has not been impressed by Addis's handling of the affair. When Addis suggested sending Monk on his way with a huge payoff, Hollick said that if Monk were guilty he should be sacked without compensation and if he were innocent there was no need to sack him. As the *Eye* went to press Monk was meeting Hollick with lawyers to try to sort the mess out. Whether he goes or stays, one thing is clear: Addis is not in control of his own newspaper.

PS: Should Monk depart the betting is he will, like the Fergie book, end up at the *Sun*. Ironic or what?

WHILE recovering in the Caprice from another tiring round of mass-sackings, *Express* editor Richard Addis was seen by hackettes Chrissie Iley and Rebecca Hardy, who went over for a chat.

"Richard," they said, "it must have been terrible having to get rid of all those people?"

"Not really," said the mild-mannered ex-monk, leaning against the bar and puckering his famously seductive lemon-sucker's lips. "I rather enjoyed it. It was like clearing out an old sock drawer."

Shame Addis is not as good at running a budget as he is at dumping people: with a month to go 'til the end of 1996, he has already spent his entire freelance budget and has told underlings not to employ any more outside contributors.

But since he has sacked so many of the staff, there aren't enough hacks in the building to fill the paper. "What am I meant to do, Richard?" wailed one executive last week.

"Easy," said Addis. "Use freelances — but don't pay them until January."

NOT content with promoting Sir Jammy Fishpaste's Referendum party, the *Daily Telegraph* is now extending the same service to his equally ambitious son-in-law.

On 18 November the top half of its op-ed page was filled with the "manifesto" of Imran Khan's Movement for Justice, which is contesting the Pakistan elections. For good measure, the front page carried a large colour photo of Imran, looking mightily pleased with himself.

The very next day, Sir Jammy held a small party at Wilton's restaurant, for "family and close friends", to celebrate the birth of Imran's new baby. Guests included Princess Di, Sean Connery — and Conrad Black, proprietor of the *Telegraph*.

"For heaven's sake, Mother — turn your heating on"

THERE was much wailing and gnashing of teeth at the *Scotsman* last Thursday as cowering hacks prepared for the first visit by their new editor-in-chief, Andrew "Brillo Pad" Neill.

When will Jim Seaton, the decent but temporary editor, be pushed into early retirement? Probably sooner rather than later, as the staff noticeboard reveals that his job has already been offered to one of Neill's old chums, swinging Sue Douglas.

For the moment, Brillo Pad has declined to purchase property in Edinburgh. Instead, he is shacked up for three nights a week at the overpriced and overheated Balmoral Hotel — where the mischievous *Glasgow Herald* has installed an undercover reporter to observe his nocturnal movements. Brillo, it seems, is already no stranger to the livelier nightclubs of the Scottish capital.

WHAT is the most important political issue today? Readers of the mid-market tabloids will have no doubt: it is the campaign to relax Britain's anti-rabies laws.

"Call For Quarantine Reform Goes to No 10," a *Mail* headline announced jubilantly last Wednesday, reporting the earth-shaking news that "Lady Fretwell, wife of the former ambassador to Paris", had discussed this hot topic with "one of Mr Major's advisers". There have been at least a dozen stories on the same theme in the *Mail* this year.

Another of Associated Newspapers' rags, the London *Evening Standard*, has been equally vociferous, describing the UK quarantine laws as "evil". A few months ago the *Standard* even despatched a hack to Sweden, to report on how much happier the Swedes had become since lifting their quarantine controls.

Not to be outdone, the *Express* has been filling acres of space with indignant whinges about our "cruel pet laws". Its news coverage has included such splendidly objective headlines as "How Rabies Law Increases Dangers"; "Doctors 'Wrong' Over Quarantine"; "Rabies Risk Remote"; "The Tragic Victims of Rabies Law"; "Pets' Christmas Behind Bars"; "Rabies Law Traps Us, Say Ex-Pats"; and "Rabies Laws Hit Tourism".

The propaganda has had the desired effect. Last Tuesday's *Express* reported that ministers had "vowed to respond to mounting pressure" for legal reform. The same day's *Mail* also noted that "pressure for change" was growing.

What pressure? Apart from the grumbles of celebrity expats such as Chris Patten, there's little evidence of massive public outrage at the UK's anti-rabies precautions. However, for the past couple of years both Lord Rothermere (of Associated Newspapers) and Lord Stevens (of the *Express*) have ordered their hacks to keep banging away at the subject regardless.

Naturally, this is quite unrelated to the fact that Rothermere and Stevens are dog-lovers and frequent-flyers, who are incensed that they cannot take their pet pooches with them during their foreign jaunts.

DESPITE the acres of space devoted to the two minute silence by the *Daily Mail* and *Evening Standard*, the idea of officially honouring the eleventh hour of the eleventh day at the Kensington offices seems to have slipped the attention of the top brass at Associated Newspapers.

Hacks at the *Standard* who wanted to honour the dead were told that it would be business as usual. Indeed, Hitler's deputy, Peter Boyer, was overheard telling one unfortunate that were he to stop work for the two minutes, he'd "have to make the time up at the end of the day".

■ David Bailey's photograph for Burton Menswear showing three young men urinating against a white studio backdrop has been watered down at the request of the Advertising Standards Authority,

The Observer

PUNCH SUNK

ON THE day of Peter McHackey's dismissal from *Punch* last week, telephone callers to the mag's office were treated to a recording of "In the Deep Midwinter".

And it wasn't only the frosty winds that were moaning. When McLie was told by his boss, Stewart Steven, that he was being fired for "moonlighting" — ie starting a weekly column in the *Daily Mail* — the aggrieved hack pointed out that Steven himself earns a tidy sum on the side by penning a weekly page in the *Mail on Sunday*.

Slightly embarrassed by these apparent double standards, Steven did his best to help McHackey find alternative employment. At an Associated Newspapers party on Tuesday, the night before the sacking, Steven sought out his old chum Sir David English. "Can't you get Max Hastings to find a perch for Peter at the *Evening Standard*?" he begged. "To soften the blow?" No such luck, alas.

Nor can the former Mr Punch expect much help from the *Mail*'s owner, Lord Rothermere. After perusing McKay's drivelling Monday column in the *Mail*, which fills the slot vacated by Andrew "Brillo Pad" Neill, his lordship delivered his verdict: "I never thought that I'd miss Andrew Neill."

DURING last week's upheavals at *Punch*, it was widely reported that the circulation had settled down at about 50,000. This must have come as a surprise to advertising agencies, who have been assured by the mag that it is actually selling well over 80,000 copies a week — and have been charged commensurately high advertising rates.

It also raised a few eyebrows in the news trade, though for a different reason. According to the latest returns from wholesalers, the news-stand sales of *Punch* are in fact not unadjacent to 20,000 copies. No doubt a few extra are sold on subscription — but surely not *that* many?

FOLLOWING the distressing events of last week — when Peter McKay was sacked as editor of *Punch* by his boss, Stewart Steven — grief-stricken citizens may be consoled by this reminder of happier times.

The picture, taken 10 years ago, shows McHackey (right) celebrating his appointment as editor of *Sunday Today*, and being presented with an appropriate parting gift by his then editor at the *Mail on Sunday*, Stewart Steven. The Revell kit of a great ocean-going liner was much appreciated. *Sunday Today* closed soon afterwards.

HALLO!

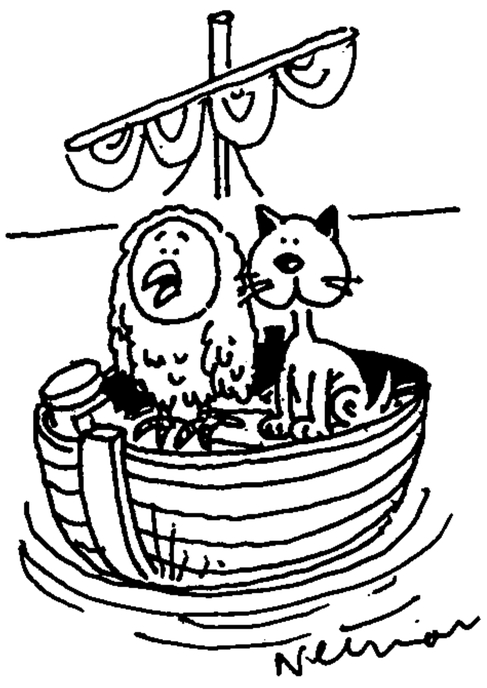
THE HEARTWARMING COLUMN

HALLO! SIR Nicholas Scott, the upstanding Tory MP fighting against deselection in Kensington and Chelsea (after being found, face down, in the gutter by police) bravely admits he had a drink problem, but has "kicked it". On the night in question, during the Tory party conference, he still insists he only had two glasses of wine. Er, that surely was the following morning.

The Marquesa, who was present at the Irish embassy party, reported (*Eye* 909) that Sir Nicholas was knocking back whiskies and that as the bar closed one guest cried, "Sir Nicholas would like another Jameson's!"

Clearly, my English had let me down and the man had yelled, "Sir Nicholas would like another Evian water!"

Or was it Perrier?



"I'm surprised about Pam and Tommy Lee – they seemed perfectly matched"

HALLO! *DIANA's stepmother, Raine, the Countess de Chambrun, has finally found a job, as a director at Mohamed Fayed's refined Kensington emporium, Harrods. So Raine will not have to respond to the store's advertisements for Christmas staff (male and female porter packers), which concludes: "Please bring with you your references and valid passport."*

Mr Fayed, of course, could not be hired himself — as the beastly Michael Howard continues to block his application for a British passport.

HALLO! DISTRESSINGLY, The Princess of Wales's blessed mother, Frances Shand Kidd, was in court, again, last week on drink-driving charges. This can only be part of Buckingham Palace's "dirty tricks" campaign to discredit Diana's faction. But one of the Marquesa's girlfriends fondly recalls a visit some years ago to Mrs Shand Kidd's then home (a fish farm) on the Isle of Seil, off the west coast of Scotland.

All the way down the drive were delightfully welcoming notices in her own handwriting KEEP OUT, THIS MEANS YOU, BUGGER OFF. When Mrs Shand Kidd eventually staggered out of the house, she lurched towards the visitor — and pushed her right over. Twice!

In the brisk Scots air, there was a distinct whiff of *essence de Glenfiddich*.

HALLO! **I SPEND a tearful evening with the lovely Sheryl Failes, now reconciled with much-misunderstood footballer Paul Gascoigne. Sheryl tells me that at one stage she even consulted m'learned friends about the possibility of a divorce from Gazza — just four months after the golden couple's tasteful wedding was featured in something called *Hello!* magazine — but now all is hunky-dory again.**

Sheryl lets me into the secret of the sad night when the couple had the row which ended with Gazza thumping his bride.

Sheryl and Gazza were enjoying a romantic, candlelit dinner at the Gleneagles Hotel when Gazza broached the subject of Christmas arrangements. Wouldn't it be grand, he asked Sheryl, to have all the Gascoigne clan up from Gateshead for a big happy family get-together? Maybe some of Gazza's best mates, such as Jimmy "Five Bellies" Gardner could drop in, too. Aghast at the thought of spending the festivities with Gazza's neanderthal rellies, Sheryl strongly demurred. A blazing row ensued of the type which many couples have at this time of year — but in the case of Gazza and Shezza it continued through the rest of the evening and ended in violence.

HALLO! THANK goodness Donald Findlay QC, vice-chairman of Rangers Football Club, has been re-elected as rector of St Andrew's University. Mr Findlay's main electoral platform was that he is prepared to offer free legal advice to students.

One of Scotland's best-known advocates, Findlay's most celebrated recent legal opinion was that the behaviour of Rangers' star Gazza in knocking about his wife, Shezza, was "a private matter" and no concern of the football club. Rightly, the St Andrew's students duly paid tribute such legal acumen. Who says today's brilliant, gilded youth are sick nihilists?

HALLO! *JANE WARD, Prince Charles's former fancy, recently decided she would not write a royal kiss and tell (see Eyes passim), as her husband had come into some money. Today, Jane is on an even better financial footing as she has got a job with bumptious tradesman and snob Peter de Savary. Confusingly, however, some absurd person called Avon Priestly is now claiming to be ghosting Jane's revelations about "Life With Brian".*

Will she or won't she? I hope Jane wasn't like this when romanced by the heir to the throne!

HALLO! **GRIM-REAPER lookalike David Montgomery, millionaire supremo of the socialist *Daily Mirror*, faces a tragic threat to his vast share-option fortune (see *Eyes passim*). Estranged wife Heidi Kingstone is consulting the legal firm of Mishcon de Reya (as patronised by the Princess of Wales and Jerry Hall).**

She recalls that in happier days when she and Monty announced they were to marry, the toadying staff of *Today* — where both of them worked at the time — had a whip-round to buy a wedding present. It was a painting by the Countess of Woolton, an up-and-coming (but not very far) artist whose day job was at Saatchi & Saatchi.

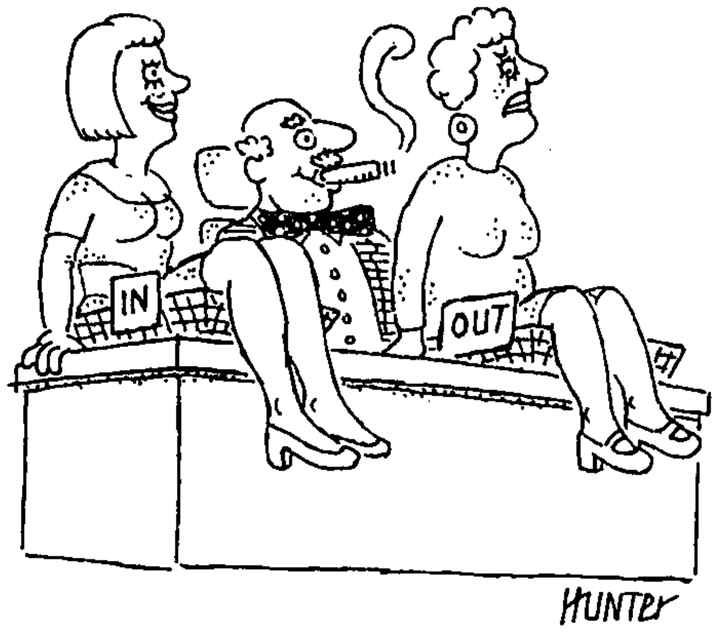
When "Rommel" subsequently decided that he preferred Sophie Woolton's company to that of Heidi, the spurned hackette re-examined her taste in art — with the result, she gleefully reports, that she ripped the painting to shreds.

HALLO! *TRAIN journeys can be so dull — but not when former cabinet colleagues Michael Heseltine and Norman Lamont share a carriage.*

No sooner had the Marquesa and the deputy prime minister settled into first-class on the King's Cross to York express recently, than we were joined — to Hezza's evident dismay — by the prospective Tory candidate for Harrogate, Norma Lamont.

Multi-millionaire Hezza visibly brightened, however, when the ticket inspector upbraided Norma for travelling first class on a second-class supersaver ticket!

After much shuffling of plastic money, the champion of ERM and patron of Threshers in Paddington bought his way out of trouble. This did not entirely suit Tarzan, however, who had to endure Norma's company for the rest of the journey.



HALLO! AS MY clever friend David Willetts is being lynched by a hysterical Commons kangaroo court, today I present a character witness as to the Paymaster General's lovable qualities.

The Havant Tory Party, for whom David is MP, are based at Homewell House, where Mrs Morag Fraser used to work, in premises rented out by the Havant Tories. She recalls, during the last election, the prospective MP arriving to talk to her boss. A constituent, unable to see Willetts, caused a violent rumpus on the stairs. Mrs Fraser and three other women from adjoining offices eventually quietened the man down and led him out. Returning upstairs, they heard the Tory office door unlock and saw the pale face of Mr Willetts peep out!

HALLO! **MODEST Richard Branson should take over where the late, great Marje Proops left off as agony aunt to the afflicted. Dear Richard has been confiding to friends that at one point the Princess of Wales had a crush on him. But he was far too much of a gentleman to take advantage of a girl in distress. Even more chivalrous, I learn, when the Virgin boss first discovered that the marriage of Bob Geldof and his lovely Paula was in difficulties, he packed them off to Jamaica — all at his own expense — to sort themselves out.**

Naturally, they got divorced.

HALLO! I AM always keen to hear the stimulating opinions of Mary Kenny, the *Express*'s "voice of traditional values" who declares in her latest column: "Africa was never so well run as under the Empire. I have never met an African I didn't like..."

She can say that again. Mary modestly does not mention that in her less prudish years she famously enriched the language with a new phrase by engaging in vigorous discussions with a one-legged African friend in an upstairs room at a party. The subject? Traditional values in that sunny but oft-times turbulent land, Uganda!

'The Marquesa'

IN THE TEAROOM

THE IRA has told the Northern Ireland minister, Michael Ancram, that if the government does not respond to its new peace feelers by Christmas it will blow up Ulster's police stations and courthouses.

Clearly the IRA has still not learned that it is only when its bombers blow up stockbrokers' offices that this government pays any attention to them. In any case, the prime minister knows that if he even *appears* to be appeasing the terrorists, Westminster's combined loyalist command would boot him out at once.

Indeed, no sooner was the IRA's threat delivered than the government's business managers had reached another "understanding" with the unionist leader, David Trimble: that he would maintain them in office once their majority disappears after the Barnsley by-election. It had to be an "understanding" because the Ulster Unionists do not do "deals".

But this one is likely to prove a *mis*understanding. The wily Trimble is well aware that Labour will be in power very soon and he has been casting around the tearoom in search of a parallel "understanding" with them.

Labour has come some way to meet him, ditching its policy of "a united Ireland by consent". But Trimble is distrustful of Labour's Mo Mowlam, the Northern Ireland spokesthingy, because she is a scheming Blairite clone. He does, though, trust Labour's MP for Vauxhall, Kate Hoey, because she comes from sound Ulster Protestant stock. He's presented her with his wish list over a sticky bun, and is now looking to her to tip him the wink once the party's Northern Ireland policy takes on a more orange hue. When she does, the unionists will suddenly find they have no confidence in Her Majesty's government.

'Urquhart'

SIR Nicholas Bonsor, red-faced and blue-blooded minister of state at the foreign office, has intervened magisterially in the mystery of the arms-for-Argentina affair.

Eye readers will recall that a recent edition of Channel Four's *Dispatches* wondered whether the decision by the department of trade and industry to allow the sale of spare parts for Rolls Royce engines for Argentinian warships was perhaps a breach of the "rigid" arms embargo imposed on arms sales to Argentina since the Falklands war.

The revelations in the programme persuaded Tony Lloyd, Labour's frontbench foreign affairs spokesman, to write to the prime minister pointing out that on several occasions before the spare parts were allowed to be sold, everyone concerned, including Rolls Royce, had believed that spare parts for warship engines were specifically banned by the embargo. Had the embargo been lifted? he asked.

No, definitely not, replied Sir Nicholas, on Mr Major's behalf. True, he admitted, Rolls Royce had twice (in 1993 and 1994) been refused a licence to supply the Argentine navy with precisely these spare parts — but that was the company's fault because it "specifically identified in its application that the engine parts were specifically designed or modified for military use". It was only when Rolls Royce asked the government for advice on the "general licensability of the engine parts" that both sides suddenly discovered spare parts for warship engines were not military at all, and so didn't need an export licence!

Sir Nicholas insisted this was not a change in the embargo, just a clarification of something which had always been the case if only Rolls Royce had realised it. He then read Mr Lloyd a little lecture on "playing politics" with the issue.

GILLIAN SHEPHARD's drive for higher educational standards should perhaps have started closer to home.

The Ofsted report on the troubled Ridings School in Halifax, drawn up by a high-powered hit squad of senior schools inspectors, refers to it as a "secondary modern". Odd: since the one thing teachers, pupils and parents there all agree on is that The Ridings is a comprehensive.

The education secretary, by the way, has quietly backed off her demand that all schools in the Calderdale district be subject to inspection before Christmas. Education committee chairman Michael Higgins had insisted that for the sake of the district's children, the education authority's energies should be concentrated for the rest of this year on sorting out the problems at the Ridings and that the other schools could wait until January. After due consideration, Mrs Shephard's civil servants have agreed. Higgins is not holding his breath for an apology from Shephard.

THE Tories' opposition to state funding of political parties could soon be undermined by one of its most steadfast corporate supporters.

Between 1979 and 1995, the insurance giant Legal & General Group plc bankrolled the Tory party directly to the tune of £264,000. During the same period, another £70,000 was channelled to central office via British United Industrialists; and the company also handed over a total of £18,400 to the Economic League, the agency that blacklists employees with a history of trade union activism.

But now Legal & General appears to believe its donation is not a worthwhile investment. Its board has passed a resolution, proposed by chief executive David Prosser, in favour of state funding of political parties. This could be more than just a grand gesture. If the unprecedented motion is accepted by the Association of British Insurers and Pension Funds, which tightly regulates the industry, it could become holy writ throughout the insurance business.

If other companies follow Legal & General's example, it could mark the end of private funding and the Tories' cash advantage over Labour for future elections.

LIKE Sir Jams Goldsmith, Alan Sked, the LSE lecturer and former Liberal parliamentary candidate who leads the crackpot UK Independence Party, is doing his best to dissociate himself from the right-wing extremists who have come flocking to the cause.

His best does not appear to be very good, however, because the phone at UKIP's London headquarters is answered by one Bea Carthew, veteran fascist and former National Front supporter.

In an exclusive interview with the *Eye*, Carthew, 79, whose role, she says, is limited to "doing what I can — making the tea and stuffing envelopes", said she had been completely open with Sked about her views and past associations. "He knows all about me," she said. "I wouldn't have come to work here without telling him. I didn't actually join the party because I didn't wish to bring discredit on him." So that's all right, then.

PLYMOUTH Sutton Tory MP Gary Streeter is enthusiastically backing plans to extend the runway at the city's airport, despite the strong objections of locals.

It has been operated by British Airways since 1992, when BA took over local operator Brymon Airways. BA want a longer runway so they can use bigger planes and carry out more tests on their short-haul fleet.

Gary Streeter has forgotten to remind everyone that he is a partner in local solicitors Foot & Bowden. It has also slipped his mind that Foot & Bowden are solicitors for Plymouth City Airport Ltd... and for British Airways.

WITH Sir Jammy's hat in the ring, attention is turning to the battle for Putney at the general election. Although most coverage has focused on the great dictator and the greasy Mellor, Labour strategists are more concerned about a third possibility — that their man might win.

Thrice married millionaire Anthony Colman, or "Tony" as he now prefers to be called, is chairman of the Low Pay Unit — most appropriately since he made his fortune in the notoriously well-paid rag trade.

Ken Behaving Badly

FURIOUS bar room gatherings of lobby correspondents have hatched a sinister plan: the next time "the spin doctor, formerly known as Peter Mandelson" tries to intimidate one of their number during a press conference, they have all agreed to storm out.

The shock tactics were decided in the aftermath of Mandelson's menacing of mild mannered *Daily Torygraph* political editor George Jones, at a press conference staged to rebut Tory claims about Labour's spending plans. Jones had walked out of the conference following repeated accusations from the Prince of Darkness that he was a central office nark — for reporting what Tory spokesmen had been saying.

"These are new tactics," says a Jones ally, "usually Mandy tells us that he won't give us any more stories if we offend him, and that he is going direct to the editor, who is of course an 'old friend'. I've lost count of the number of times I have been told that this will all result in a P45".

WHO IS CASSANDRA?

THE betting is hotting up on which senior Labour MP wrote, under the pseudonym "Cassandra", the vicious attack in *Tribune* magazine on party leader Tony Blair.

Evens: **John Garrett**, experienced former frontbench spokesman who has been seen in the *Tribune* offices and has not been able to disguise his contempt for Peter Mandelson, who replaced him as Labour spokesman on the civil service. (The contempt derives from the entirely unfair observation that Garrett knows and cares a lot about the service, while Mandy knows nothing and cares less).

4-1: **Denzil Davies**, former junior minister. Fed up with the Labour leadership ever since Kinnock kicked him out as spokesman on disarmament because he believed in, er, disarmament.

9-1: **Peter Shore**, former cabinet minister. Fed up with the Blair line on Europe (and being refused permission to speak in the Europe debate at the last Labour conference).

50-1: **Austin Mitchell**, Grimsby veteran. Lost hope of office under Blair.

99-1: **Ken Livingstone**, not yet lost hope of office under Blair.

100-1: **Brian Sedgemore** (Where is your writ?)

300-1: **Peter Mandelson**, who might have planted the piece in *Tribune* to scare off the left.

500-1: **Sir William Connor (deceased)**, author of the much-feared "Cassandra" column in the *Daily Mirror* for more than 30 years.

'Backbiter'

NOOKS and CORNERS

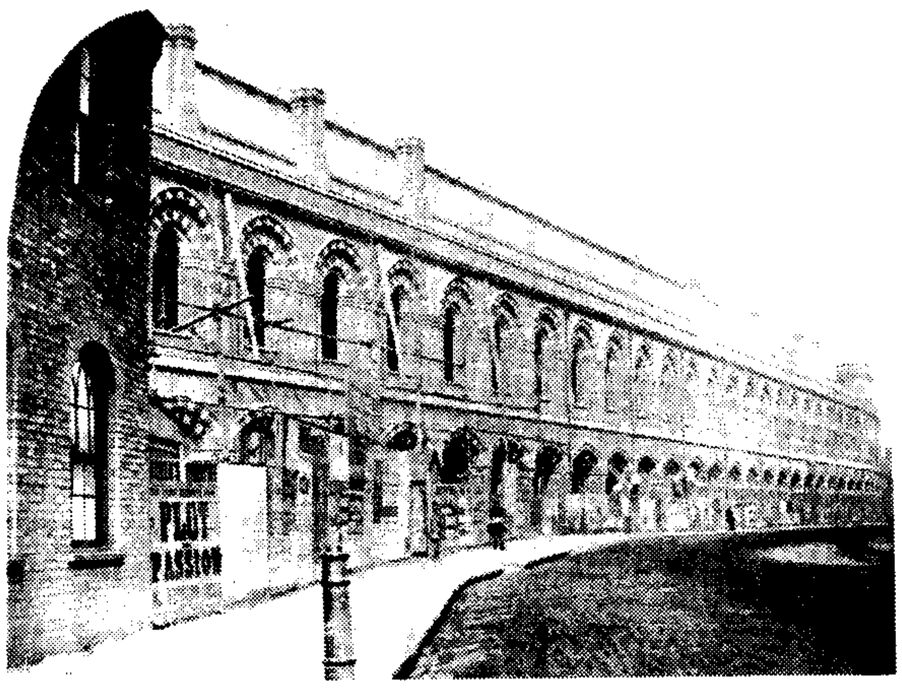
CREDIT where credit is due — for once to Sir Jocelyn Stevens, who is doing the right thing by English Heritage and fighting for one of the great buildings of the world: St Pancras Station.

He has written to London & Continental Railways Ltd, which, at the government's behest, has graciously consented to convert the Victorian railway terminus into a Channel tunnel rail link terminus for London, to voice his concern at the total inadequacy of the heritage agreement in the railway bill which is currently trundling through parliament.

"This is fundamentally unacceptable to English Heritage... you are insisting that you should have carte blanche to carry out any operation railway works you choose within the train shed without the need to reach agreement with English Heritage or Camden Council. This would embrace not just the permanent way and railway engineering works, but all aspects of the scheme including plant, gantries, signals, ticketing and booking office facilities, signs, platform screens, display boards and seats etc. As a result, far less control would be exercised over alternatives at St Pancras, a grade I railway building of national importance, than many other listed railway buildings of far less importance."

The department of transport, indeed, wants London & Continental to have complete freedom to do anything it likes — except the placing of shops — but we know that the government detests any constraints on private enterprise. Remember that when the Channel tunnel station was going to be underneath Kings Cross, there was a clause in the bill giving exemption from listed building control which was thrown out by parliament. Since then things have somewhat improved: never mind that the present scheme *is* flawed, that it is silly to have trains from, say, Milan to Aberdeen running into St Pancras and reversing out again and that it is absurd to bring Kent commuters into St Pancras as well so necessitating extra platforms, while the Baxter Plan still remains best, it is obviously good to give a new lease of life to W.H. Barlow's stupendous 240 foot span 1868 train shed.

However, the present state of affairs is both unacceptable and dangerous. The government is happy to surrender all its powers to make binding determinations on applications for listed building control and, worse, parliament is being asked to provide extensive powers to a private company for extensive works to a grade I listed building without seeing any actual plans for what is proposed — for none yet exists. This has never happened before. So, quite rightly, English Heritage together with the Victorian Society (which had to fight British Rail's plans for demolishing both St Pancras and Kings Cross 30 years ago) is busy lobbying parliament to amend the bill.



The government, in the noble form of Lord Goshen, assures us that "there is no intention whatever to ride roughshod over legitimate heritage interests"; yet if the bill goes through English Heritage cannot stop, say, the demolition of Gilbert Scott's magnificent Gothic arcaded west wall of the station if this is deemed necessary for the railway works. The government has indeed produced a set of planning and heritage minimum requirements for St Pancras, but these are based on the NEWT criterion — as in "Not Environmentally Worse Than" — and the Victorian Society has pointed out that nothing could be worse than the existing "reference design" by British Rail's own architect which has "significant negative impact of particular importance (unavoidable)". And when the Victorian Society asked to see the wording of the contract which the government assures us deals with heritage concerns, London & Continental refused to release details on grounds of commercial confidentiality. So much for opengovernment.

But the real reason for this despicable behaviour by the government is that the London & Continental project at St Pancras is the flagship "private finance initiative" (PFI) project — and nothing, but nothing, must interfere with the success of that. But if the St Pancras project is approved with the developer allowed to do virtually whatever he pleases, it will set a disastrous precedent for other PFI schemes: why should other eager developers be saddled with restraints if London & Continental can get away with murder?

Meanwhile we learn that — surprise! surprise! — Foster Associates has got the job of converting St Pancras. This may be reassuring to those who think that genius shines from Sir Norman's every orifice — after all, he cares deeply about Victorian engineering structures. Well, he also has a deep commitment to the Modern Movement, but that did not stop him buggering up the famous house in Old Church Street, Chelsea, by the great *Erich Mendelsohn* (which the sadder but wiser client, Paul Hamlyn, now regrets).

So unless parliament can be made to see sense — some hope! — the future of poor old St Pancras looks grim.

'Piloti'

My daughters look at Barbie dolls and they don't see a toy, they see male manipulation of the female body form.

ANITA RODDICK
Daily Express

I've always loved 911s. There can't be a single other machine that so completely represents the preoccupations of the culture that produced it — in this case, research and development. It fascinates me to look at the progressive evolution of the car over 30 years, a process of transformation as subtle and inspiring and, ultimately, as complete as the evolution of church's architecture from Romanesque to Gothic, over three centuries. Only the trunk lid, fuel-filler flap, doors and glass are common. Every other component has been mercilessly exposed to Darwinian imperatives.

STEPHEN BAYLEY
Car Magazine

KAREN FIRUS A.K.A. RENAISSANCE WOMAN
Karen is a Renegade, Visionary, Lover of Lipsticks and Fabulous Babe from Vancouver. Her paintings, furniture, wood works, films and rock 'n' roll sets for TV reflect her passion for fashion, Fellini, screamin' hot colours and accessory hoarding. Karen's magenta-licious art is treasured in private collections of the rich and funky. This babe received her MFA in film from UBC. Her objective? To knock the socks of the world!

Vancouver Arts Umbrella
'Splash' party programme

Pseuds Corner

Most corporate re-engineering fails because companies have too few metaphors, according to Dr Gareth Morgan, research professor at York University in Toronto. He recommended that managers should spend more time finding "new metaphors for turbulent times" and less time introducing organisational revolutions.

Morgan believes in the power of metaphors. He showed delegates a picture of a clergyman kneeling, eyes turned to heaven, which was transformed by the addition of a flowerpot balanced on his nose. With this small change, the evangelist became a street performer doing a balancing trick. Morgan's point was that a small alteration can revolutionise people's perceptions.

Companies should be doing this from within, he said. New perceptions lead to employees finding their own new solutions: "Most re-engineering fails because it can't find the flowerpots."

People Management

They put a catwalk down the middle of the hall and instead of having the models walk on carpet or whatever made them wade through a six-inch tray of water. As they walked through the water ruined their dresses. What made it special was the idea of a designer being prepared to ruin his clothes. It made you feel like you were part of something really special.

RICHARD BENSON
Campaign

TIME AND VALUE
What is the relationship of time and value? According to some narratives there was once a time, a sacred temporality, in which time was at one with value. Then science, technology and capital combined to dislodge time from value: to create a homogenous and linear time separated from a realm of value and attached to the utility and exchange of commodities. At the same time ethical and aesthetic values became detached from forms of life and re-inserted in the inner temporality of the evaluating and eminently mortal subject. But is there now a 'third age' in which post-apocalyptic sensibility and cultural proliferation threaten to render society truly value-free? Or does the rebirth of community, the good life and the political signal a re-integration of time and value, a re-inscription of collective memory onto the surfaces of the wounded body?

'Time and Value' conference
Lancaster University

CONTRIBUTORS: N. Rooke, R. Beadle, I. White, R. Cane, D. Lodge, A. Non.

£10 paid for entries

EYE TV

The Trial of Kevin Maxwell (BBC1)

SECRETLY commissioned by Alan Yentob three years ago, BBC executives have been congratulating themselves over their success in transmitting The Trial of Kevin Maxwell, directed by Nadia Haggar.

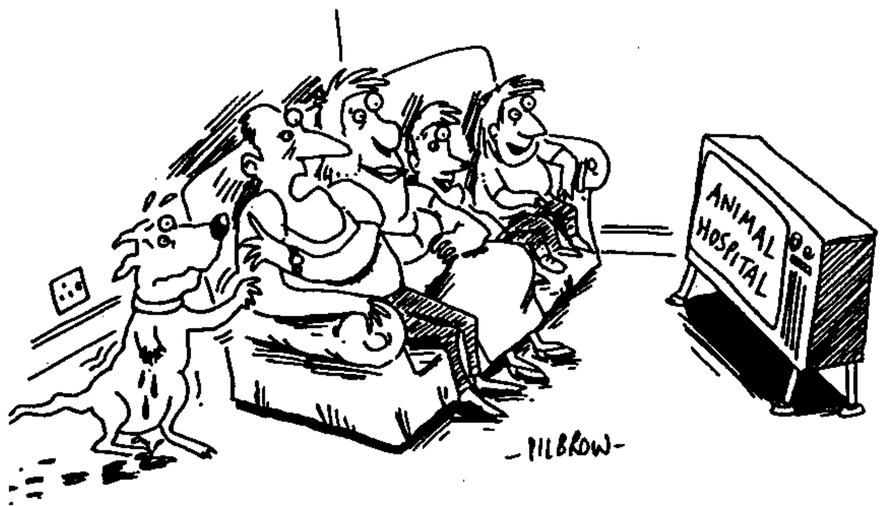
Despite devastating reviews — "haggarography", "stomach turning", "appalling", "shameless", "ludicrously sympathetic" and "public relations exercise" — Botney, Michael Jackson and Kim Evans, the head of music and arts, gleefully justified the film by repeating that the BBC had a duty to be "fair" to the Maxwells after Tom Bower's devastating indictment of the family two weeks earlier.

Especially proud of his "scoop" was Nigel Williams, the executive producer who vigorously defended the film's captioned assertion: "The Mirror pension fund has been restored." For days Williams bleated: "Kevin assured us that's true." But just 90 minutes before transmission, the caption was withdrawn. Lawyers for the pensioners convinced Evans that Williams was peddling a Maxwell lie.

Another lie peddled by the BBC was that Nadia Haggar, the director, had by some brilliant, journalistic fluke won access to Kevin and his family. In fact, Haggar and Pandora share a close mutual friend, and as Pandora told a journalist: "Nadia promised us that we could trust her." Haggar did even more, according to Pandora. She was utterly charmed by Kevin and allowed him to dictate the content of the film. Including a devastating defamation of Peter Laister, a former MCC executive, whom Kevin particularly loathes.

Evans and Williams defended all the lies Kevin repeated unchallenged in the film by insisting that in the "fly on the Wall" technique, "the camera never lies". That's true. Instead, the director and executive director allow the lying in their editing of the film.

Insisting that Haggar had followed Kevin during the years up to his acquittal, the team failed to tell the viewers why they did not show Kevin regularly flying off in private jets from Northolt and Luton to meet his ex-KGB chums in Paris, Vienna and Kazakstan, staying in five-star hotels (and watched everywhere by MI6). Nor did they show Kev regularly enjoying five-star luxury hotels in New York. After all, that would have embarrassed his claim for legal aid and would have contradicted Kevin's insistence that "there is no pot of gold". So what about the $32 million which disappeared with Kevin from New York when his old man died?



"Not now, boy. Not now..."

Unquestioned, lurking in the background of the Warnford-Davis's 16-bedroomed house (paid for by guess who?) was Pandora's brother Darryll. Shame that the "fly on the wall" did not ask Dopey Darryll about his purchase of MCC shares — to prop up the price — at Kevin's request using pension fund money.

Nor did the fly ask Pandora's father John what he actually did in return for his salary from Cap'n Bob? Instead, the "fly" let Kevin get away with whopping lies that "Bob Maxwell is innocent" and ridiculing "the idea that we sat around a table and conspired to take the pension fund shares". But that's exactly what the two Maxwells did.

Nigel Williams, who in his spare time writes suburban fiction and presumably finds facts too complicated to consider, conveniently forgot that Cap'n Bob did indeed plot daily over one year to use not only the pension funds but over £2 billion of other people's money. All the evidence of Kevin's dishonesty in the last year — his systematic manipulation of the ownership of shares, his constant lies to bankers, lawyers, accountants and fellow directors, and his plunder of the pension funds — is set out in obsessive but incontrovertible detail in Bower's *Maxwell, The Final Verdict*, but "Maxwell" Williams preferred to believe dear Kevin's unquestioned protest, "none of these catastrophic losses would have happened" if Bob had not died.

Tear sodden, Williams and Haggar allowed Kevin to say that he had "no sense of impact" of Bob's death during the first 48 hours afterwards and that the prosecution's claim that all the alleged crimes were hatched in those two days of bereavement were ridiculous. In fact, Kevin's own brother-in-law testified at his trial that dear Kevin had lied to him only hours after Bob's death about a whopping £150 million! And he'd been lying about that money over the previous year. And a string of other bankers and employees testified that cool Kevin had done nothing else but lie in the hours after Bob's death.

But integrity no longer concerns the BBC wallahs, who became sick to death of poor old Bower whingeing on about the truth. Clutching reassuring memos received from each other, Yentob, Jackson, Evans and Williams were proud to have "got the film out".

MEDIA NEWS

THOSE familiar with the BBC's long-running internal dispute over the John Gorman/British Airways documentary (see *Eyes passim*) will recall that the item was pulled amid accusations that the BBC and BA were linked at the highest level: via PR man Sir Tim Bell, and the alleged friendship between John Birt and a senior BA figure.

Imagine BBC employees' surprise, then, to receive a "Special Travel Update" circular announcing some good news.

"Earlier this summer we reached a new agreement which designates BA a preferred airline to the BBC...", the glossy pamphlet revealed. "It's important that the BBC gains maximum benefit by supporting the new agreement." It then went on to list three "good BBC reasons to fly BA!" How very cosy!

WHEN *The Cook Report* investigated allegations of child prostitution in Wales earlier this month it gave two teenage girls in the care of Cardiff county council a two-day freebie at the luxurious Miskin Manor hotel so they could tell all at their leisure.

Alarmed at the prospect of further media interest, the council hired local PR firm Lowe Bell Good Relations — a snip for council taxpayers at £400 a day — to fend off further inquiries from inquisitive hacks. The job was apparently deemed to be beyond the abilities of the council's permanent three-strong PR team.

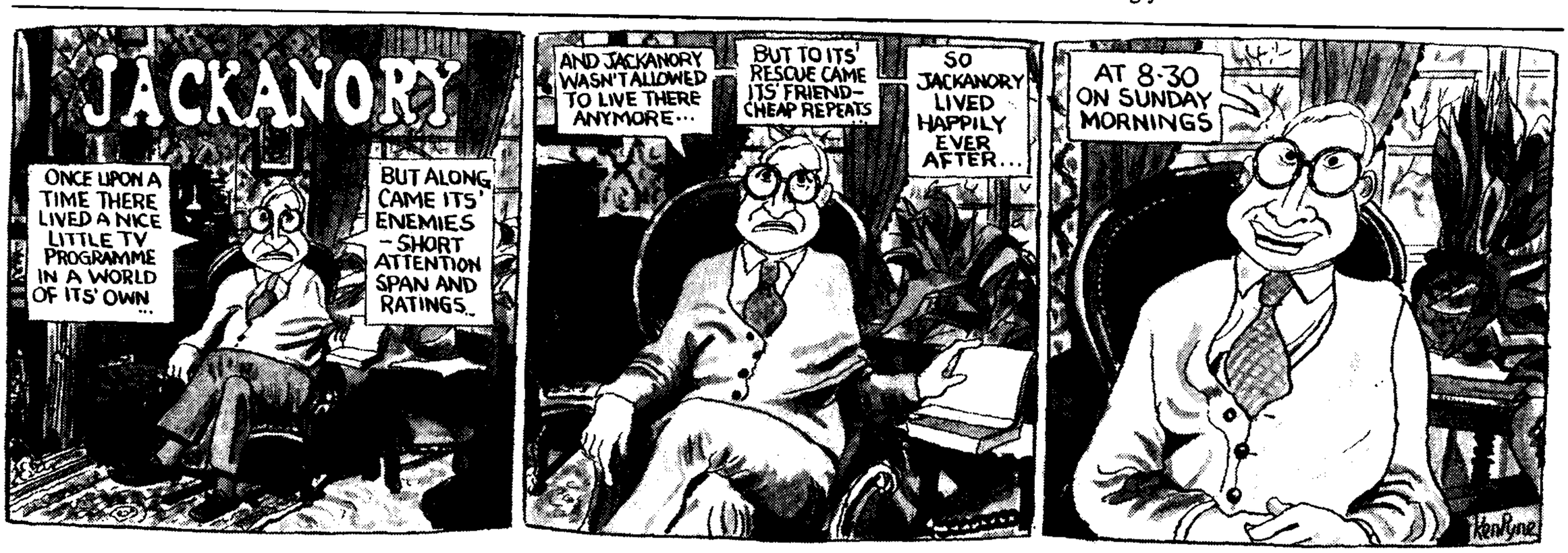
THE *Guardian*'s media section carried a large advert last week from the BBC, begging for ideas for a new sitcom "that could make the nation laugh", as part of the corporation's "Talent 2000" scam (sorry, *scheme*).

Funnily enough, this was placed next to a big feature exposing the BBC for... shameless plagiarism of programme ideas.

SIR David Frost has lost none of his knack for dealing with famous men.

When Lord John Taylor, the would-be Tory MP who was too black for Cheltenham, and Ann Atkins, the woman who doesn't want church services for gays, revued the papers on *Breakfast with Frost* recently, the only thing that united them was a dislike of the great patriot Sir James Goldsmith and his Referendum party ads.

They attacked him for running a political campaign in Britain while being a French MEP and living in Mexico. It was left to the combative Frost to, er, immediately jump to his chum's defence. "Well, he does live in this country, too," he whined fawningly.


JACKANORY
ONCE UPON A TIME THERE LIVED A NICE LITTLE TV PROGRAMME IN A WORLD OF ITS' OWN...
BUT ALONG CAME ITS' ENEMIES - SHORT ATTENTION SPAN AND RATINGS..
AND JACKANORY WASN'T ALLOWED TO LIVE THERE ANYMORE...
BUT TO ITS' RESCUE CAME ITS' FRIEND - CHEAP REPEATS...
SO JACKANORY LIVED HAPPILY EVER AFTER...
AT 8-30 ON SUNDAY MORNINGS
KenRyne

A LONG and touching apologia for John Birt appeared in the *Sunday Telegraph* a fortnight ago, penned by the BBC's foreign affairs editor John Simpson.

It is only a few weeks since another BBC hack, John Ware, was severely rebuked by his bosses for writing a *Sunday Telegraph* piece about Esther Rantzen. As the corporation explained at the time, staff are contractually forbidden to write for the press without permission.

Still, there was little danger of permission being withheld in Simpson's case, say colleagues who remember him signing a letter to the *Times* in support of the beleaguered DG a few years ago. Simpson's ex-colleague Mark Tully resigned from the BBC because it insisted that his contract contain a gagging clause, even though his views on the corporation were well known and already in the public domain.

Could this be a case of one law for the 92 per *cent of* BBC employees who are, according to a recent union survey, thoroughly disenchanted with Birt — and another for the 8 per cent who think he is doing a good job?

It is now known that even relations between the DG and some of his senior colleagues are none too harmonious. When he needs to make a big BBC decision these days, Birt consults Bernard Williams, the professor of moral philosophy at Oxford university and ex-husband of Shirley "Limehouse" Williams.

The professor is undoubtedly a clever chap — author of such blockbusters as *A Critique of Utilitarianism* and *Making Sense of Humanity* — but his detailed knowledge of programme-making is rather limited. Birt's preference for abstract philosophy over practical reality may explain why the news and current affairs "directorate" is now being required to get a 24-hour continuous TV news channel up and running by October next year on a budget one-third the size of that of Radio 5 Live — and all from a "lean-to" at Television Centre which isn't even large enough to accommodate the existing staff, never mind the World Service radio and television news operation which also has to be fitted in somehow. Perhaps bemused BBC hacks will find some answers in another of Prof Williams's books: *Shame and Necessity*.

ALTERNATIVE VENTRILOQUIST

HACKWATCH: TARA PALMER-TOMKINSON

IN HIS recent memoirs, Andrew Neill claims that "the most educated and affluent in society" started reading the *Sunday Times* under his editorship: "So much for the constant refrain that I had taken the *Sunday Times* downmarket."

How does he square this with his invention of the "Style" section, a trashy tabloid supplement beside which the *Sunday Sport* looks like the *New York Review of Books*? Simple: "The beauty of a multi-section newspaper is that you can go up- and down-market at the same time."

Of course. And what could be more "up- and down-market at the same time" than Tara Palmer-Tomkinson, the bimbo toff who has now been recruited as the Style section's main columnist?

Tara herself strongly resents the suggestion that she is a vacuous airhead. In an article for the *Spectator* a few months ago, she boasted of having 10 O levels and 3 A levels — and of having once read a book by Jane Austen. "I want to be taken seriously," she told an interviewer at the time, "not just known as a frivolous party-goer."

Thanks to her *Sunday Times* columns, she is succeeding magnificently.

22 September: After posing with her friend Normandie Keith — "for the cover of November's *Tatler* magazine" — Tara attends the launch party of fellow-columnist A.A. Gill's novel, *Sap Rising*, where she espies "Bryan Ferry and Pink Floyd's Nick Mason, as well as my friend Tamara Beckwith with Lisa Hogan, who looked absolutely beautiful... I also bumped into my sister, Santa, and instantly turned green with envy at the amount of jewellery she was drenched in. One of the perks, I guess, of working for Theo Fennell — there with his beautiful wife Louise, also covered in fantastic jewellery..."

29 September: Tragedy! "I had to turn down a weekend in Peking for David Tang's launch of the China Club there. Because I am modelling in his Shanghai Tang fashion shows in Hong Kong, I'll be popping in there anyway, but it was a shame to miss a fun weekend with my friends Muck Flick, Vivienna Duffield and Jocelyn Stevens." She consoles herself by visiting "a host of fashion shows at Annabel's Club in Berkeley Square", where she sees her dear friend Normandie Keith looking radiant. Luckily, "I wasn't looking too bad myself in a borrowed Catherine Walker A-line dress and a pair of Gucci knee-length boots". Later, at the Gucci fashion show, "I spotted Tania Bryer in the front row." As for the outfits, she sighs, "everything was so to-die-for".

6 October: "Tara Palmer-Tomkinson is away." Worrying news indeed: one can only hope she realises that the phrase "to die for" isn't meant to be taken literally.

13 October: "On Wednesday morning I was whisked off by Cartier on the Eurostar to Paris, where I was helping them to launch their new La Creation perfume..." Er, not quite: as she admits in a shamefaced apology the following week, La Creation is not a perfume but a jewellery range. Still, what's the difference? To confirm her status as a serious thinker, Tara then trots off to the Cambridge Union — where she enters to "a chorus of wolf-whistles at my extremely tight Lisa Bruce dress".

20 October: A historic week. "I'm an 'It' Girl. It's official. *Tatler* magazine's new issue has a glossy cover picture of me and my friend Normandie Keith, under the heading 'It girls'. And not only that but Cartier, the up-market jewellery company, has photographed me and my contemporaries — Emma Parker-Bowles, Letitia Cash and India Hicks among them — for a glossy coffee-table book." Well done! But, Tara warns us, being an It girl isn't all joy. "Going to parties can be hard work — mostly because so many of the people I meet are so boring. I go to up to three events a night and it is often the same mindless cocktail chat at every party..."

27 October: "Television offers were rolling in thick and fast this week. *The Big Breakfast* called up..." Alas, she has to say no, as "I'm going to Hong Kong to model David Tang's new collection for Shanghai Tang, which will be really exciting. He is having me flown out Virgin Upper Class."

3 November: Returning from "the most amazing trip" to Hong Kong for the Shanghai Tang fashion show, Tara proves conclusively that travel broadens the mind. "I don't care what China does to Hong Kong after the takeover," she observes sagely, "but if they touch Shanghai Tang, they'll have to deal with me."

10 November: "After all the tabloids blaring out last week how much I hate parties, and mocking my It Girl Hell story, I'd like to set the record straight. I don't think parties are hell at all..." No sirree. This week's outings include the launch-party for a book of fashion photos, where Tara meets Suzy Menkes of the *International Herald Tribune*. "Far from jawing about fashion, though, we talked jet lag..." So much better than mindless cocktail chat, eh?

17 November: After the premiere of *The First Wives Club*, Tara heads off to a "star-studded party" at the Café Royal. "I met Greta Scacchi and Jeremy Irons. I told him that I'd spotted him in a mountain restaurant in Klosters with his children — I don't know why, but he looked at me as if I was a nut." After this snub, she feels so "grotty" that she has to spend all day in bed. "I can tell I'm ill because even the new issue of *Vogue* is lying unread on my bedside table..."

No doubt her fellow intellectuals, such as Susan Sontag and Marina Warner, will know just how she feels.

EXHIBITIONISTS

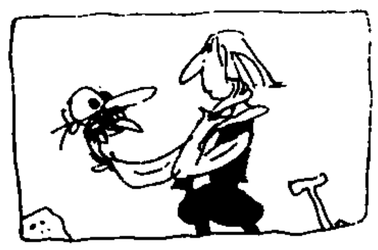
THE obsession with privatisation is now costing the Tory party itself dear.

In 1994 the design and presentation of its annual conference was contracted out to WCT Live Communications Ltd and its parent firms, CCO Conference Ltd and Global Conference Ltd.

Like many privatisations, it has not been cost-effective. The absurd backdrop at the recent conference cost £30,000, while in the old days the bill for a similar design was just £15,000. Huge sums were also spent on the over-large stage where John Major and Brian Mawhinney did their pathetic Morecambe and Wise routine.

The senior official at central office who pushed for this expensive contract to be put out to tender was Shirley Stotter. On 24 June, WCT Live Communications Ltd hired a new director to adorn its board. Can *Eye* readers guess her name? Step forward... Shirley Stotter!

UPSTAGE



THERE has been so much back-scratching at the Royal Court Theatre lately that uninformed observers might think the place has been infested by fleas.

The recent *Omnibus* documentary about the theatre's lottery bid turned out to be little more than a personal puff for artistic director Stephen Daldry — hardly surprising, since the programme was produced by Daldry himself and directed by David Lan, a shadowy figure who is the Royal Court's writer-in-residence.

The BBC executive in charge of *Omnibus* is Nigel Williams, whose awful play *Harry and Me* was staged by the Royal Court last year. By another remarkable coincidence, BBC boss Alan Yentob (Williams's close friend and holiday companion) happens to sit on the council of the Royal Court, and was instrumental in securing Daldry's appointment.

Now follow the chain of coincidence over to the Royal National Theatre. This time the beneficiary is David Lan, whose pisspoor drama *The Ends of the Earth* was one of the Cottesloe's recent disasters. Oddly enough, his close friend Nicholas Wright, who wields much the same influence at the RNT as does Lan at the Royal Court, has a major say in planning the repertoire. (To confuse matters still further, Wright also sits on the Royal Court council.)

Meanwhile, Nicholas Wright's play *Mrs Klein* is due to open next March at the Watford Palace Theatre, whose artistic director Giles Croft has just been workshopping his stage adaptation of *Kind Hearts and Coronets* at the National Theatre Studio, programmed by (guess who!) Nicholas Wright. The Studio used to be the NT's experimental wing, but under Wright's tutelage it has now been reduced to "investigating" old Ealing comedies.

Is it time for theatreland's very own Nolan inquiry? Other subjects for scrutiny might be the meteoric rise of Jeremy Sams — from his first production as a fledgling director to the main stage of the Lyttelton in just two years. Naturally this had nothing to do with his close friendship with the RNT's executive director Genista McIntosh; nevertheless, now that McIntosh has moved on to the Royal Opera House as general administrator, luvvie-watchers will be interested to see if Sams's talents are also used at Covent Garden before long.

DOING THE ROUNDS

DISTRICT auditor Paul Griffiths has not been kind to South and East Wales ambulance trust (Sewat), currently facing a £2 million debt.

Trust executives drew up plans for £2.4 million centralisation costs which misled the Welsh office (the real cost was £3.6 million); £125,000 was wasted on unused computers; £350,000 went on management consultants who achieved savings of only £182,000; and "controls to exercise proper standards of proberty were breached".

The trust's haphazard system of issuing staff credit cards left it "open to error and potential fraud", and former fleet manager Steve Whitehart has been asked to repay the £2,500 it cost Sewat's Cardiff workshops to convert an ambulance he bought from the trust into a camper van.

David Triggs, who resigned as chief executive earlier this year after taking the rap for the abysmal finances, has now set himself up as a consultant in Exeter. His **QEF Career and Management Services** are offering £99 a head seminars on how to run an ambulance service.

● "IT'S very hard to understand how a senior public servant could place himself in a position, deliberately or otherwise, which enables him to walk into a job which is being funded by the very health authority he's retired from a day earlier."

So said Janet Beyleveld, chief officer of **Sheffield community health council**, of George Walker, ex-commissioning director of **Sheffield health authority**. Mr Walker retired at the end of August to join **Primary Care Multifund Ltd**, which had secured contracts worth more than £100,000 to provide management services to the city's fundholding GPs. Mr Walker's health authority post was to encourage the development of the multifund and to set up a GP cooperative to manage out of hours care. PCM Ltd has also won the £35,000 contract for that.

Walker has denied allegations that he abused his position, despite the discovery that he joined PCM on April 29, three months before he decided to declare this as a possible conflict of interest to the health authority. As George put it: "At all times I've been working in good faith, in the interests of developing the health service in Sheffield."

● **MERTON, Sutton and Wandsworth health authority's** winter survival plans to limit non life-threatening operations has not gone down well with Nigel Sewell, chief executive of the **St Helier trust**. "Patients will suffer disabling pain and discomfort... Some may even die waiting for treatment they need." Four thousand patients are likely to be put on hold as 120 beds and 150 staff posts are lost.

● A QUARTER of all trusts are facing debts of up to £1 million this year, with 4 percent over £1 million in the red; 40 percent of health authorities are in debt up to £2 million, with 13 percent over this figure. Half of all trusts failed to reach their performance target of a 6 percent return on assets, while the number paying their chief executive £100,000 or more doubled. And of the 140 non-executive members of trusts and health authorities to declare a political affiliation, 83 vote Conservative, 45 Labour and 12 Lib Dem.

● SHELAGH YATES, assistant hotel services manager at **Yorkshire's Seacroft hospital**, sent an interesting memo to all wards and departments on 16 November. "Tonight, at 1800 hours, further work will be done on the switchboard. This may involve a temporary break in services. In an emergency, to contact switchboard find a coin box (you will need cash) and dial the hospital number. In the event of the bleep system going off the air as well, it is possible to get an urgent message out by dialling **Leeds General Infirmary** or **St. James's**."

Meanwhile, **Killinbeck** hospital, part of **United Leeds teaching hospitals NHS trust**, is having to absorb its share of the trust's attempts to reduce its debt to just £6 million. Paediatric intensive care beds have been cut from five to four, and cardiothoracic beds are down on ward five. A unilateral management proposal to reduce these beds by a further 15 has not amused the cardiothoracic surgeons, and a cut in general surgical beds seems likely. This despite the fact that the existing beds are often full with some overspill on to inappropriate wards.

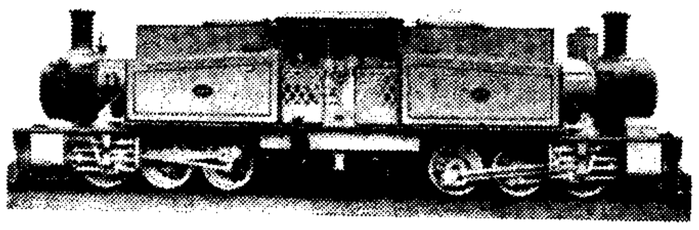
● **CALDERDALE NHS trust's** recent undertaking that the shortfall in funding available to meet the private finance initiative tender for its new hospital would not affect bed numbers (*Eye* 908) has not lasted long. Chief executive Haydn Cook has given the green light to a cut from 500 to 453.

"Scalpel, forceps, bone saw... and that concludes this year's outlay on new medical equipment"

● MORE evidence emerges that the NHS is becoming increasingly reliant on the overspill of doctors from our European friends (*Eyes passim*). In 1995, the **General Medical Council** registered 10,235 new doctors to practise in the UK. Just 3,710 were UK medical graduates. The number of "European Economic Area" doctors was up 23 percent on 1994 and 56 percent on 1995 with the top four contributors Germany (610), Ireland (175), Greece (254) and Holland (252). This masks the fact that an increasing number of UK graduates are giving up, emigrating or working part time, and preserves the private income of senior doctors as European graduates are destined never to make it to consultant level. The government is conveniently spared the expense of educating these doctors while their increasing numbers diminish the bargaining power of UK graduates.

● **EAST London and City health authority** is seeking to save £4-5 million next year by cutting the district nurses, health visitors, school nurses and midwives in Tower Hamlets by 100.

M.D.



SIGNAL FAILURES

PASSENGERS who were doused with free doses of weedkiller helped Railtrack make a profit of £173 million between March and September.

One *Eye* reader was amazed to find a special train spraying weedkiller on the tracks while he and 50 others waited for a train at Fratton, Portsmouth, at 7.30am one day. "As a breeze was blowing you could taste the chemical," he wrote to South West Trains.

Stagecoach-owned SWT was so concerned it passed his letter to South West Infrastructure Maintenance Company, which passed it to Railtrack, which passed it to Railtest. After further prompting, Railtest replied: "The requirement to avoid disruption to passenger and freight services places severe restrictions on the available movements that can be made by special services such as weed control, the result being that there are occasions when the train passes through stations which are populated by passengers."

A more influential requirement was that for Railtrack to make its enormous profit it needed to save an extra £66 million on costs. BR used to spray at night, on Sundays or at dawn in summer to avoid exposing passengers to chemicals like Diuron 80 WP and Arsenal 250. By allowing the work at the convenience of the weedkiller sprayers during normal shift times, Railtrack is able to save money.

TRANSPORT secretary Sir George Young unwittingly flaunted the inflated rail subsidy required by the fragmented railway when he said in a radio interview: "With two thirds of the rail system now in the private sector, only one third of the former subsidy paid to BR is being paid to the private-sector companies."

The statement was made in late April, when five franchises had been awarded — way short of two-thirds of the passenger system by any yardstick — but Sir George felt entitled to include franchises close to being handed over. The government had hived off choice parts of InterCity and Network SouthEast but none of the former Regional Railways system — set up specifically to run loss-making services. Obviously, then, most of the subsidy continued to go to the still-nationalised sector.

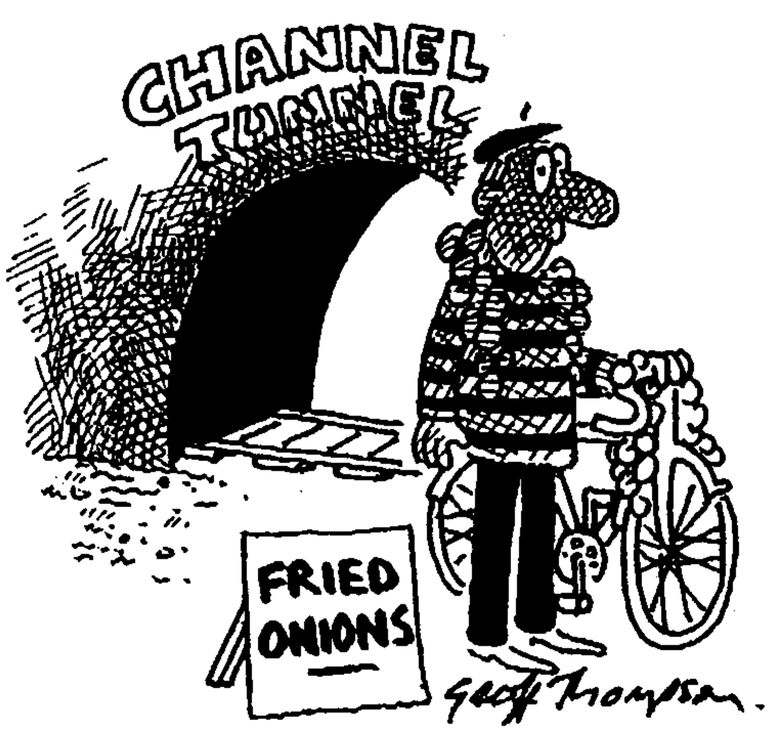
In its last days as a unified railway, BR operated four of the first five divisions to be franchised *at a profit*. The fifth, South West Trains, was part of Network SouthEast which, before the recession, was covering its operating costs and needing subsidy only for capital investment. Now, according to Sir George, the five need hundreds of thousands of pounds in subsidy to keep afloat.

THE fragmented rail network worked its magic over the half-term holiday when Connex, operator of South Eastern and South Central franchises, offered five days' travel for £10.

This bargain enticed people who had not used a train for years; but some were baffled by the reception they got if they boarded trains not run by Connex. On some routes to which the offer applied, including Brighton and Bournemouth to London, most trains are run by other operators who would not accept the cheap tickets. To add to the confusion most of the trains were indistinguishable, bearing the same red, white and blue as Connex trains. Lucky passengers were thrown off at the next stop, others were made to pay the full fare.

The operators' refusal to cooperate for the common good mirrors practice in the bus industry since deregulation in 1986. Latest figures show a continuing decline in bus usage everywhere except London — the one place buses are still regulated.

'Dr B. Ching'



TREVVIES*

WOODY Harrelson insists he enjoys being depressed. "When I let up from the weed, and the drinking too, I cried every day. And I *liked* that. I like crying. And now I not only wanna cry and show my crying to other people, I wanna just split myself down the middle and open my guts and just throw *everything* out!"

Evening Standard

Submitted by Frances Templeton.

An occasional column devoted to gems from the acting profession. £10 paid for entries.

***formerly "Luvvies"**

THE
Rotten Borough Advertiser
Friday, 29 November 1996

TIPPING THE BALANCE

MEMBERS of Knowsley council Labour group were shocked to be summoned to a hastily arranged meeting recently with planning officer Graham Smith — a meeting called so hastily some councillors hadn't even had notice of it.

Happily, however, a few days beforehand the *Liverpool Echo* carried an "exclusive" on the confidential presentation. It concerned a proposed multi-million pound "Soccer Academy", hotel and retail development to be carried out by Liverpool Football Club plc, mainly on the site of the old Kirby Town football ground.

Knowsley chief executive David Henshaw was so enraged by the leak he ordered minions not to talk to the *Echo* for a fortnight. But he need not have worried: Knowsley's downtrodden Labourites, who occupy 65 of the 66 council seats, were whipped into line by leader Jim Keight OBE, and the mega-bucks plan went through on the nod.

Nevertheless, Liverpool FC's proposed "Ajax-style" centre for sporting excellence is against Knowsley's own unitary development plan, which specifies that the sites are for local community use and *not* for commercial development. Yet since the land deal with Liverpool FC is worth at least £5 million, such considerations aren't important.

Liverpool FC manager Roy Evans has been of no uncertain help in brokering the deal between his club and Knowsley council. He of course has business interests of his own in the borough, and for several years has been in a partnership which aims to open a rubbish tip on land at New Cut Farm, Kirkby. Planning permission has been refused on several occasions by Knowsley council.

On 5 December, however, Evans and his business chums may be in luck with their reapplication for planning permission for the tip when it goes before Knowsley's planning sub-committee again.

BIFFA BUNG 3

ROGER Morris, chief executive of Merthyr Tydfil county borough council, has raised more questions than he answered in his attack on previous *Eye* articles.

His claim, that the £10,000 was paid by the rubbish firm Biffa to the council on 27 April 1995, raises an interesting question: why did it take the council until 31 July 1995 to admit it? After all, according to a recent letter from Morris, the cost of resurfacing Blaen Dowlais was funded by Biffa for the 1994/95 financial year, which means the council must have known it was getting the money before 31 March 1995.

In addition, Berian Griffiths, Biffa's landfill director, is on record as saying that "the payment was directly negotiated between the chief executive and myself, following a request by committee". That raises the question: *which* committee? The Trecatti site liaison committee knew nothing about the money at its meeting on 25 April 1995.

This meeting was unusual as neither the chairperson nor the vice-chairperson were available and it was chaired by Cllr Ray Thomas, leader of the council. He, mysteriously, made no mention of his success in getting the £10,000 bung (*"benefit", shurely?*)

Roger Morris's claim that the trip to Belgium was necessary because there is no similar plant nearby is contradicted by the fact that Welsh Water's representative at the April meeting, Mr Stewart Fisher, later offered the chance of a visit to an identical plant in Bridgewater, Somerset, a couple of hours' drive away. Indeed, Thomas was in a better position to know this than anyone as he works for... Welsh Water.

When Roger Morris argues that liaison site committee "members have not been silenced on these issues", could he explain the decision of the 16 September meeting to bar Philip Owen, a local resident coopted in 1994, from the committee? An hour and a half later he was allowed back in to ask if he had any questions under any other business. Biffa even claimed in the *Merthyr Express* on 11 October that Mr Owen "gate-crashed" the meeting, stating that he was "not officially representing anyone". This was news to the Dowlais Residents Action Committee, whose secretary and representative on the liaison committee is... Mr Owen.

BARRATT HOMES IN

FORMER Cambridgeshire county council chief executive John Barratt has begun his inquiry at Hackney council into the affair of Mark Trotter, the paedophile care worker who died of Aids (see *Eyes passim*). Barratt has quickly learnt that Hackney cannot be trusted to look after children in its care.

Five times during his 12-year career in Hackney Trotter was investigated by the council — and cleared — of sexual abuse. Was he innocent? Unlikely. Inspector Knacker of Merseyside, which is carrying out the Operation Van Gogh inquiry into abuse at children's homes in Cheshire and Liverpool, was also investigating Trotter over claims that he had abused six boys while in charge of the New Heyes Assessment Centre in Liverpool. When Knacker went to arrest Trotter in July 1995 he found the latter had died of AIDS a few weeks previously. So he wrote to Hackney social services director Joyce Moseley, Trotter's last boss, with offers of help in tracing the 415 children who would have come into contact with Trotter at the Trowbridge home in Hackney where he last worked.

Amazingly, Moseley failed to respond. Instead, she put social services manager Len Redley in charge of tracing the victims. This was not a good move. Redley, who was already facing the sack for having shares in a children's home in which four Hackney children had been placed, was given just three months to trace the 415 former inmates. He took 10 months, and when he then left the council's employ (due to the shares issue) Moseley was unable to trace *him*. Still, at least Redley left a "report" — a couple of handwritten pages of less-than-useless information.

Moseley and assistant social services director Dynah Morley have told everyone how they did their job by keeping the area child protection committee, which Morley chairs, informed of the affair. No mention of Trotter was ever minuted at one of the committees.

● WHEN Inspector Knacker raided an illegal African shebeen in Hackney in the early hours of Sunday morning recently he found scores of revellers supping a foul brew known as Zairian "Guinness". Knacker was even more surprised when one reveller, Edward Asunda, claimed immunity on the grounds that the bash had council sanction and that he was a town hall worker.

The party was at the HQ of the local Zaire Community Association, a fine body which receives £20,000 a year from Hackney council and sends the money to the impoverished homeland — where it is used to buy barrels of the illicit stout. Asunda has been suspended while the council "investigates".

IN BRIEF

BENT: Tories have got off lightly in the pre-election planning bung saga. The ombudsman found that Coun "F" (David Tobert) had told a group of Tories that Jim Carlon had donated a big sum to their election fund shortly before they discussed his proposal to extend a pub, but ruled that Tobert "did not act out of any improper motive". Coun "B" (Leslie Winters) failed to register that he worked for Carlon (because he only saw the councillors' code of conduct a few hours before being interviewed), and again the ombudsman accepted this rubbish and took no action.

WELWYN: Sued for £50 million by a property company after the council gave a rival developer permission for a similar project, no one at the council would accept any blame — until the last *Eye* when Labour bosses at John Smith House intervened and resignations followed. Ray Little quit as leader, along with deputy Mike Mably, personnel chair Alan Johnson, community care chair Phil Johnson, various other Labour officers and a couple of Tories. The district auditor is looking at the idea of surcharging the former council leaders.

WAKEFIELD council's party celebrating Yorkshire County Cricket Club's decision to move there from Leeds proved too much for council leader Colin Croxall and his deputy, Norman Kennedy, who came to blows in front of astonished revellers. Perhaps they were trying to recreate the atmosphere of Headingley's notorious Western Terrace.

JUNKET OF THE WEEK

LABOUR and Tory members of Kent county council transport committee have voted to send a nine-strong "working" party to waste plants in France and Spain at a cost of £20,000. It would have been cheaper to visit plants in Worthing, Newcastle and Milton Keynes; but as the councillors say, we don't have the technology. Nor the cheap duty frees, for that matter.

O·B·N

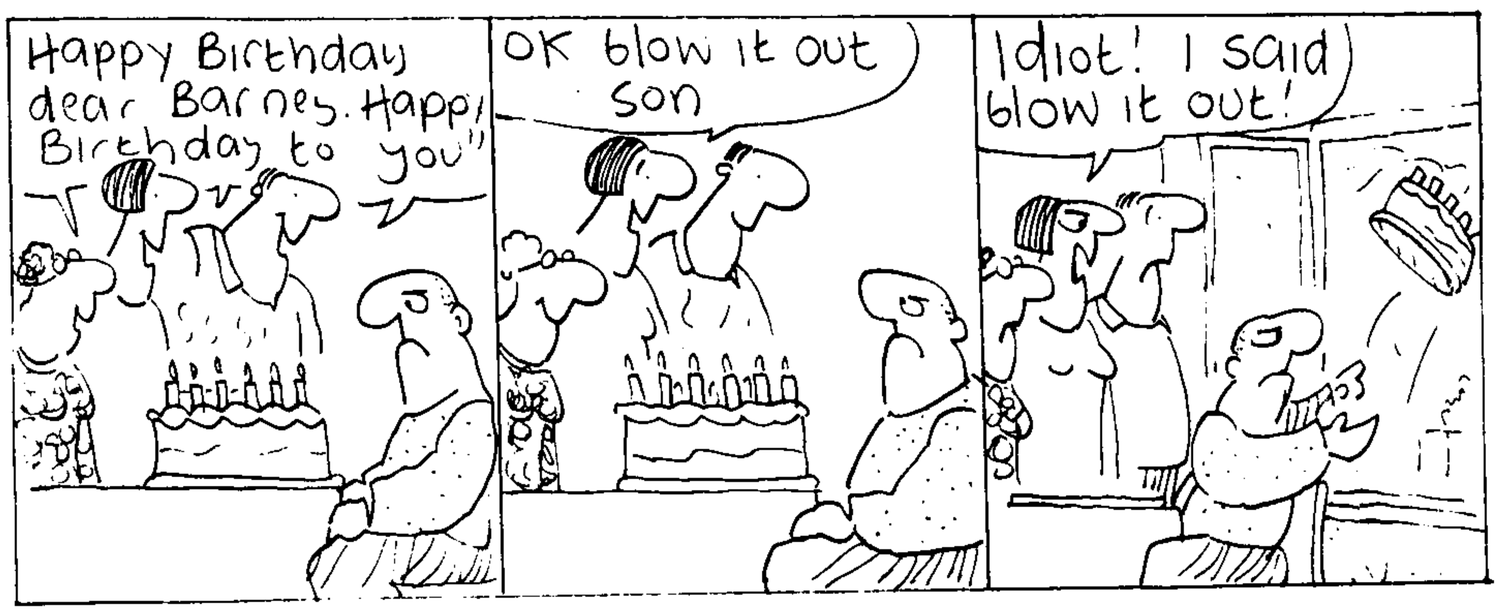
"...After all, the man's a genius. Chairman and co-founder of Microsoft, he's considered one of the century's foremost thinkers. A frontier scout, exploring the canyons of cyberspace, blazing trails where no hacker has dared take his mouse, Bill is probably the most brilliant programmer of the age, as well as one of its most ruthlessly competitive and successful businessmen... There's no such word as hyperbole when you're in the presence of the king of kings, the master of all universes, the richest American citizen, whose personal fortune is estimated at $13 billion (£8 billion). Awesome or what?"

NOREEN TAYLOR (on Bill Gates)
The Times

Submitted by Matt Shillaber ***(£10 paid)***

YOBS

HUSBAND



GREENS FINGERED

HOW can the world's resources best be safeguarded for the future? asked the *Daily Mail*'s "education notebook" in October. "The answer lies with bright young people, according to Forum For The Future, a new charity set up by environmentalists Paul Ekin, Sara Parkin and Jonathon Porritt..."

Jenny Pattinson, 18, the director of the environmental charity Global Youth Action for the Environment UK (GYAE), has discovered that former Green party leader Parkin and Prince Charles's chum Porritt are, in fact, only keen on bright young persons as long as they do as they are told.

In December 1995 Pattinson signed a contract with the Stockholm-based The Natural Step Foundation (TNS), a corporate environmental consultancy and charity, authorising her to set up a GYAE project in the UK. Pattinson set about signing up youth organisations and charities to take part in a series of projects to improve the environment, including the Scouts, Youth Clubs UK, and the Worldwide Fund for Nature. Hertfordshire county council made office space available for her at County Hall, Hertford.

Parkin and Porritt set up Forum for the Future, which aims to place high-flying graduates with environmental interests on attachments with private industry, the civil service and local government, early in 1996. They signed a licence agreement with TNS which, they claimed, gave them sole right to run GYAE projects in the UK. Pattinson suggested the two teams could work together, but Parkin advised her to withdraw unless she wanted "egg on (her) face". Pattinson refused.

In the following weeks the organisations which had previously given Pattinson help one by one withdrew support after being contacted by FFF. "If she does not resign gracefully and turn back to (Parkin and Porritt) for advice, she might cause unnecessary long-lasting harm to her credibility in the UK," wrote Karl Henrik Robert, founder of TNS.

David Woollcombe, president of Peace Child International and a former supporter of Pattinson, wrote to her: "I must warn you that you are very, very unwise to pick a fight with Jonathon Porritt... it is utter madness to go up against the leading environmentalist in this country." Last week Pattinson was told to vacate her office in County Hall, Hertford — to make way for Parkin's FFF.

Pattinson has the support of her solicitor, Paul Judkins, and Labour MEPs Dr Peter Truscott and Hugh Kerr, all of whom testify to the young woman's ability and integrity.

Jenny Pattinson told the *Eye*: "I feel that FFF see the GYAE as an attractive addition to their 'Forum scholarships' for graduates. The joke is that in the GYAE's objectives it clearly states that the project should be *entirely run by young people*."

PS: Sara Parkin is 50; Jonathon Porritt is 46.

WHEN Christian Aid launched its "Change the Rules" campaign last month urging shoppers to lobby supermarkets to stop stocking produce from developing countries where farmers work in dangerous conditions, the campaign was welcomed by Sainsbury's.

So what about Kenya, where Sainsbury's main supplier of "luxury" vegetables is Homegrown, an outfit run by expat Dickie Evans?

BBC Radio 4's *File on 4* revealed that some of the vegetables marketed in Europe by Homegrown were grown using hazardous chemicals, and that workers spraying them, without protective clothing, had reported symptoms of chronic pesticide poisoning.

Homegrown insisted the produce going to Sainsbury's was grown under strict supervision on its own farms and that workers did not suffer — although workers on the main farm had recently gone on strike over pay and conditions.

One listener in Southampton took it upon herself to write to several supermarkets, enclosing a tape of the programme, and asking them what they proposed to do about it. One supermarket responded robustly: "We have traditionally felt it wrong to adopt any moral or political standpoint," wrote Anne McGuigan of the customer services department at... Sainsbury's.

Letters

Private Eye

Wrong diagnosis

Sir,

Has anyone noticed the similarity between the Hitler diaries, the Di/Hewitt video and the letter in EYE *911 from myself? I think we should be told.*

For the record, doctors are always whingeing about their lot, comparing their working conditions with lawyers, bankers etc. I always ask why they don't go and become bankers. For some reason they never do. Nurses rarely seem to complain, although they are being asked to do more and more.

Is the Eye so desperate for letters that they have a mole in the subscription department forging away or do I have an enemy with a particularly bad sense of humour?

Yours, bright eyed and bushy tailed,
THE REAL DR MARK WELFARE,
North Shields.

Oops... Ed.

Mind the gap

Sir,

I am grateful for your efforts to publicise my forthcoming biography of Alistair Cooke (TV Eye last week). It may have surprised Square Eyes that "nowhere did I reveal" my connection with Cooke during our interview on the WORLD AT ONE. *I work on the old-fashioned principle that BBC presenters should not use their programmes to plug their oeuvres. I'm slightly puzzled, therefore, at the criticism. But thanks, anyway, for plugging the gap. And the book.*

Incidentally, all my expenses in relation to the book are met not by the BBC but by me.

Yours etc,
NICK CLARKE,
Presenter, World at One.

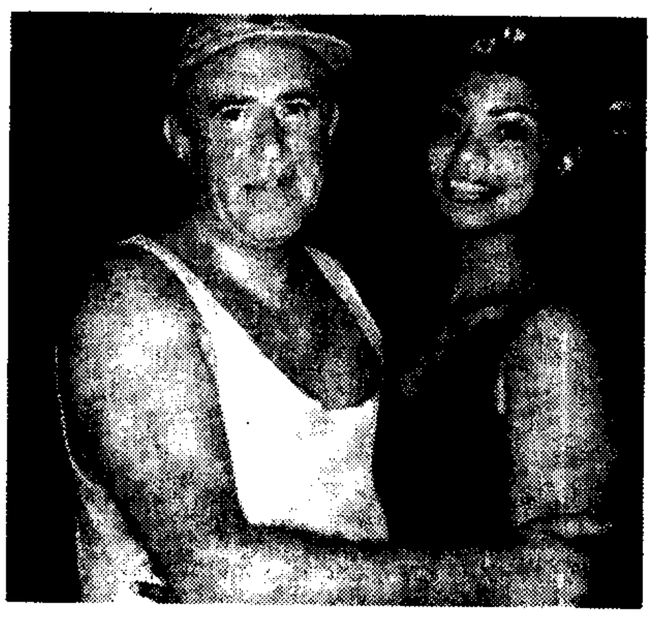
Back numbers

Sir,

Re: John Le Carré. In your latest issue Bookworm writes, as everyone else always does, that John Le Carré worked for MI6.

However, in Mark Urban's new book, he is quoted as working for MI5, and not 6.

With best wishes,
ANNE-LISE GOTZSCHE,
London NW6.



Curry favour

Sir,

I notice that the Prince of Wales and his paramour enjoyed a curry at Highgrove to celebrate HRH's 48th birthday. I wondered if you might be aware of any other down on their luck figures in the public eye who have also shown a fondness for hot Asian dishes and whether photographic evidence of this might be available?

Yours faithfully,
MATTHEW TAYLOR,
Via e-mail.

Judge meant

Sir,

*Re: P.W. Bennett's eulogy of Lord Justice Judge (*EYE *911). In my innocence I always thought that a prosecuting counsel's object was to influence the court's decision. In his time as a prosecutor Lord Justice Judge must have been a singularly ineffective one, or is P.W. Bennett just spinning a yarn?*

Yours faithfully,
JOHN MALONEY,
London N4.

Lookalike

Fergie

Debbie

Sir,

Have any other readers noticed the similarity between the new whacko Mrs M. Jackson and the Duchess of York? Could this be the way to clear debts?

Regards,
HAMISH WARBURTON,
Steyning, W. Sussex.

The chosen one

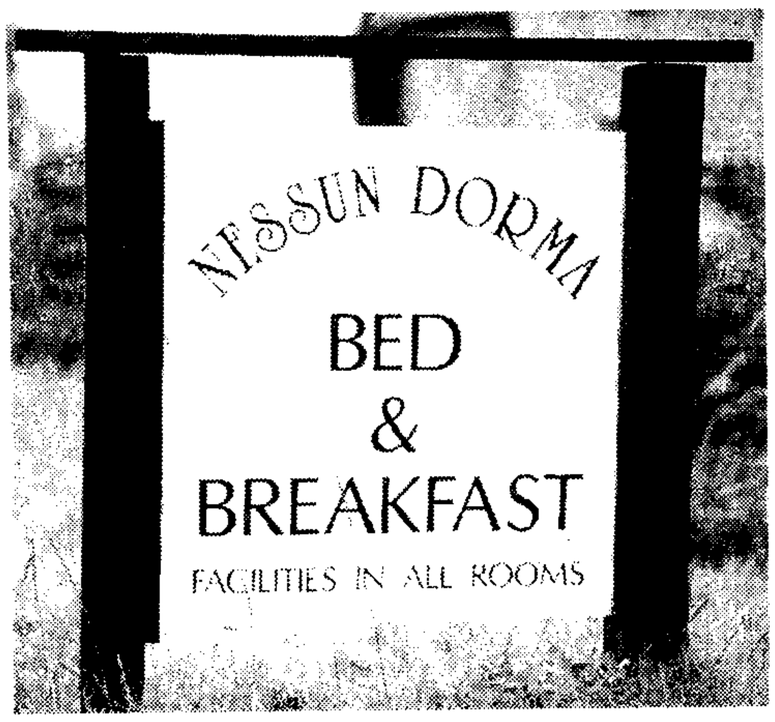
Sir,

*Backbiter's claim that I was "recently" chosen as prospective Conservative candidate for New Forest East is no more accurate than the rest of his story (*EYE *911). Since I was selected last February, my girlfriend — whom I have never "introduced as [my] fiancée" — has repeatedly visited the constituency: for its annual general meeting; for a lunch; for a dinner dance; for a conference; for a "house meeting"; for leaflet drops; etc, etc.*

It follows from this that the alleged conversation between me and a "senior officer" of the association is a fabrication — as the courtesy of a telephone call to me, or my constituency agent, could easily have established.

Yours faithfully,
DR JULIAN LEWIS,
New Forest East Conservative Association.

I-SPY *Plockton, Wester Ross, Scotland*



Submitted by Ian Dinwoodie. £10 paid for similar submissions. *(SAE required for return of photographs. No transparencies.)*

We are not a muse

Sir,

I've recently had the honour of featuring in PRIVATE EYE*'s Pseuds Corner for the second time in 18 months. Fond as I am of the* EYE*'s uncompromising satire and crusading conscience, there are a couple of thoughts I'd like to offer.*

Having noted that both my entries in your gallery of pretension were misquoted to the detriment of their sense and grammar, I wonder how many valid (if abstruse) pieces of writing are made to look stupid by your lack of editorial rigour.

I'm more concerned, however, by what one might call the philistinization of society — the Majorite notion that a touch of commonsense and a third rate education can prepare a chap for the highest office in the land. I'm deeply distressed by the idea that a few months' training in commercial technology and a word of moral guidance from the government should replace a broader schooling in intellectual curiosity. Back to basics — history is bunk — Kunst ist Scheisse — Arbeit macht frei. Are we approaching the point at which we unthinkingly ridicule anything we find a bit difficult?

Milan Kundera has suggested there are two sorts of laughter. The laughter of angels (which is joyful or angry, but always vital and sincere), and the cynical, destructive and pointless laughter of the demonic throng. I've always like the way you'll pass up a joke to make a point. But the uncontextualized, bastardized publication of someone's struggling attempts to articulate complex and often contradictory thoughts strikes me as erring on the side of the bad guys.

With my very best wishes,
(DR) ALEC CHARLES,
Clifton Wood, Bristol.

Slightly foxed

Sir,

Austin Mitchell"s laugh is exactly the same as Basil Brush's. Are they by any chance related? I think we should be told.

ROGER CROSS,
Via e-mail.

Cut your losses

Sir,

Rotten Boroughs on the Hackney Arts Festival (1 November) got it wrong. Hackney has not agreed to underwrite the losses of last year's Hackney Arts Festival as there was no Hackney Arts Festival in 1995.

Hackney Arts Festival took place in 1994. It was organised by an independent Hackney Festivals Ltd which was given a grant by the council to organise the festival. The company incurred a loss of £59,000. This was not underwritten by Hackney council.

Yours sincerely,
RICCI DE FREITAS,
Assistant Director (Leisure and Continuing Education), Hackney Public Relations & Communications Division.

Wage freeze

Sir,

While wishing you a belated 35th birthday I would like to take the opportunity of expressing my concern over the accuracy of your facts. Why must you persist in indicating that United Utilities chairman Sir Desmond Pitcher earned £338,000 last year?

Please in future state that Sir Desmond Pitcher "was paid" £338,000 last year as the rest of us lot find the concept of "earning" that kind of money a bit, shall we say, virtual? My colleagues on their new "contracts" of £3 per hour, no sick pay and no paid holiday, see a realistic (say £4) minimum wage as a means of funding their retirement and healthcare privately (oh, and eating is a must too).

I'm still awaiting the crassless society.

Yours faithfully,
JAMES STAFFORD,
Horley, Surrey.

Colemanballs

£10 paid for contributions

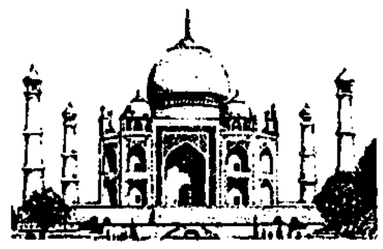
"Most cars on our roads have only one occupant — usually the driver."
CAROL MALIA, BBC North-East
(Ross Holloway)

"And with his magnetic hands he [Goram] secures the ball."
ALAN GREEN, Radio 5 Live
(Sean Ottewell)

"Chiltern FM: the station with more music and now even less talk. And, coming up in a minute, all the latest gossip from Katy."
DJ, Chiltern FM
(Richard Ralley)

"David Seaman is not great when he's got to kick the ball. With his feet..."
ALAN HANSEN, BBC1
(Tony Gray)

"Ffyona Campbell, you always seemed to me a very determined person: someone who was really driven..."
JUDY FINNIGAN, ITV
(Andrew Wilson)



Postcard from **India**

by Our Own Correspondent

THE Beeb has made another costly cock-up — this time in New Delhi, where a desperate gaggle of senior hacks, producers and suits from Bush House are twiddling their thumbs hoping the Indian government will one day okay a daily 30-minute TV news bulletin in Hindi that was due on air more than two months ago.

The recent visit to New Delhi of Barry Langride, head of the BBC's south Asia region, to kickstart the stalled service, was futile: officials at the information ministry refused to see him. Hugh Williams, director of BBC World, got a similar reception.

The Bush House broadcasters are wasting their time (and British taxpayers' money) because the disastrous venture was planned in London without clearance from the Indian government. India has repeatedly said no foreign TV network can broadcast domestically. Anyone wishing to do so must either seek editorial clearance from the information ministry for each broadcast or shift operations offshore.

Such minor details did not, however, deter Allan MacDonald, the BBC business development manager; John Bamber, in charge of setting up Hindi TV in India; or Richard Harris, of the Hindi service at Bush House. With Luke Albarin overseeing technical aspects, the trio negotiated a $3 million deal with Home TV in Delhi — owned jointly by Carlton TV of the UK, Pearson's and the local *Hindustan Times* newspaper group — to broadcast daily over their captive satellite beginning on 10 September.

Spurred on by Home TV, the Beeb thought it was shafting Rupert Murdoch, whose Star cable network based in Hong Kong is making inroads into India's domestic TV market by dubbing *Baywatch* and the *Bold and Beautiful* into Hindi, and broadcasting a daily Hindi news bulletin.

The BBC hired reporters, producers and managers at great cost; tie-ups were effected with ANI, a local TV company, for camera and editing facilities; and expensive offices were taken in Delhi where commercial property prices rival Tokyo and Hong Kong. Each expat was provided with expensive house, chauffeur and household staff.

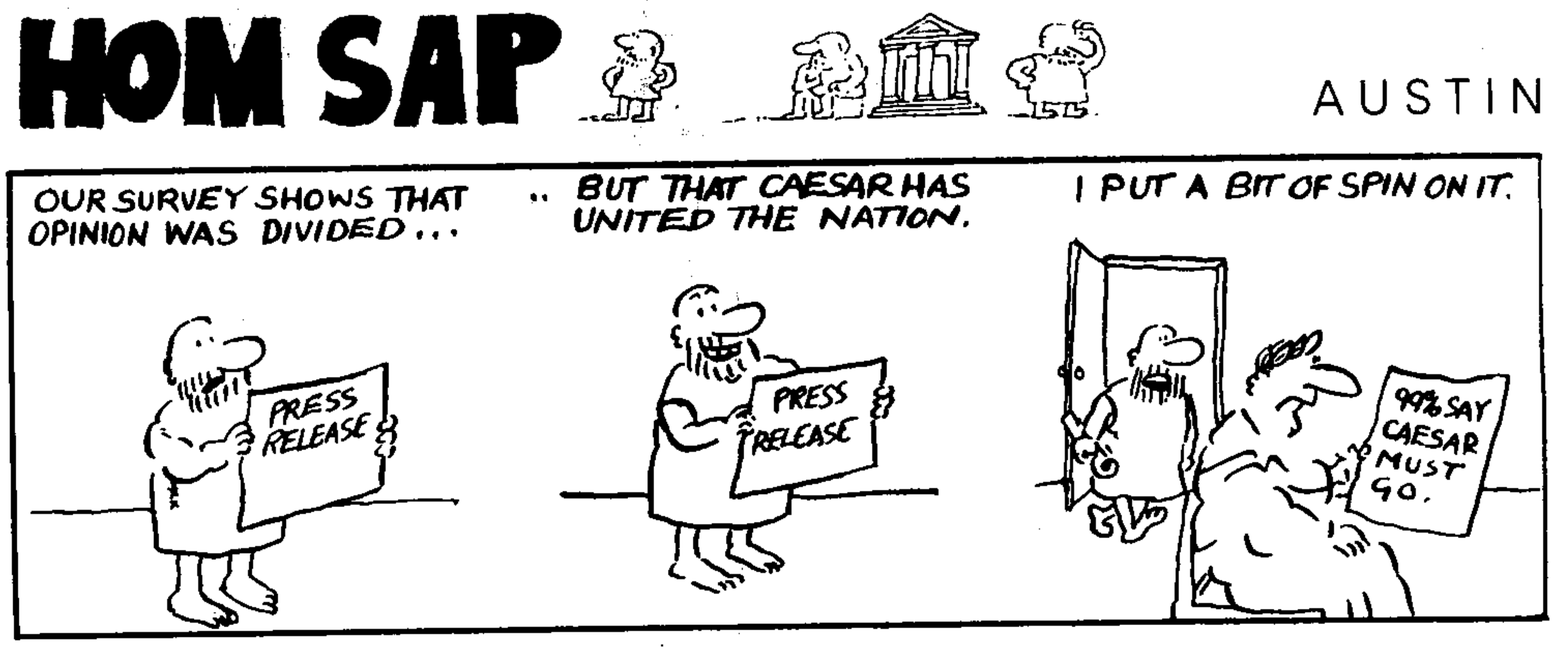
By contrast, the four Indian journalists and producers sent out from Bush House in August were on abysmally low salaries: around £8,000 compared to £25-£35,000 for the expats (of whom one speaks Hindi).

By mid-August all seemed in place — until the Boob men (*"Beeb men", shurely?*) applied to the Indian high commission in London for work visas. This was the first time anyone in the Indian establishment had heard of the Hindi TV service and the BBC men were categorically told they would not be allowed entry through the "back door" unless the information ministry cleared the daily bulletins.

When the BBC persisted it was told its case would be put to the prime minister's secretariat, the information and home ministries, the internal and external intelligence services... Or as the Indian civil service puts it: apply, apply and hope for reply.

HOM SAP

AUSTIN


OUR SURVEY SHOWS THAT OPINION WAS DIVIDED...
PRESS RELEASE
.. BUT THAT CAESAR HAS UNITED THE NATION.
PRESS RELEASE
I PUT A BIT OF SPIN ON IT.
90% SAY CAESAR MUST GO.

● **The new book, *Colemanballs 8*, is on sale now — £3.99**

FUNNY OLD WORLD

"I thank God every hour that we weren't on that bridge when Thurston shot his nuts off, cos we'd both be pushing up the daisies by now," Billy Ray Wallis told reporters from his hospital bed in the Baptist Medical Center, Woodruff County. "When you leave, can you check if anyone got the frogs from the truck? I'd hate anything to happen to them."

Woodruff County deputy Dovey Snyder later gave a more coherent account of that evening's events. "It seems that Thurston Poole, 33, and Billy Ray Wallis, 38, were returning to Des Arc after a frog-gigging trip, when the fuse for the

headlights on Poole's pick-up truck burned out. They didn't have a spare, so Wallis took a .22 caliber bullet from his pistol and found that it fit perfectly into the fuse box next to the steering wheel column. The headlights started working again, and they resumed their journey, with Poole at the wheel.

"Apparently, it never occurred to them that, if the headlight wiring was faulty, then the bullet would soon overheat. They'd gone about twenty miles and were about to cross White River bridge when it got hot enough to discharge itself, striking Poole in the right testicle and partially severing his scrotum. As a result, the vehicle swerved off the road and drove through the front window of a hamburger bar. Poole (who sustained further abrasions from broken glass, and burns from fried onions) kept shouting at the diners to 'mind my frogs', while Wallis (who sustained a broken clavicle) attempted to steal a chip-fryer in the confusion. I tell you, I've been a state trooper for ten years, but this is the dumbest thing I've ever come across. I can't believe that those two would admit how the accident happened. And all they keep asking about are their damn frogs." *(Arkansas Democrat Gazette 25/7/96. Spotter — Gary Davis)*

—o—

o *SECTION G - OTHER RELEVANT MATTERS.*
9970. Crematoria Beware. Councils are calling for Government action to solve the problem of exploding heart pacemakers, which can detonate with the force of a hand grenade during the incineration of corpses, thereby damaging local crematoria. Doctors should be aware of the problems involved, and the next of kin should assume responsibility for ensuring that pacemakers are removed before cremation. (National Association of Local Councils Direct Information Service, September 1996. Spotter — Bob Harragan)

—o—

o "The stench is getting so bad that his neighbours have been seen retching as they pass by his house," a police spokesman told reporters in Xinying, South Taiwan. "But Chang Yuan-Ching still insists that the coroner was wrong, and that his wife will soon be coming back to life.

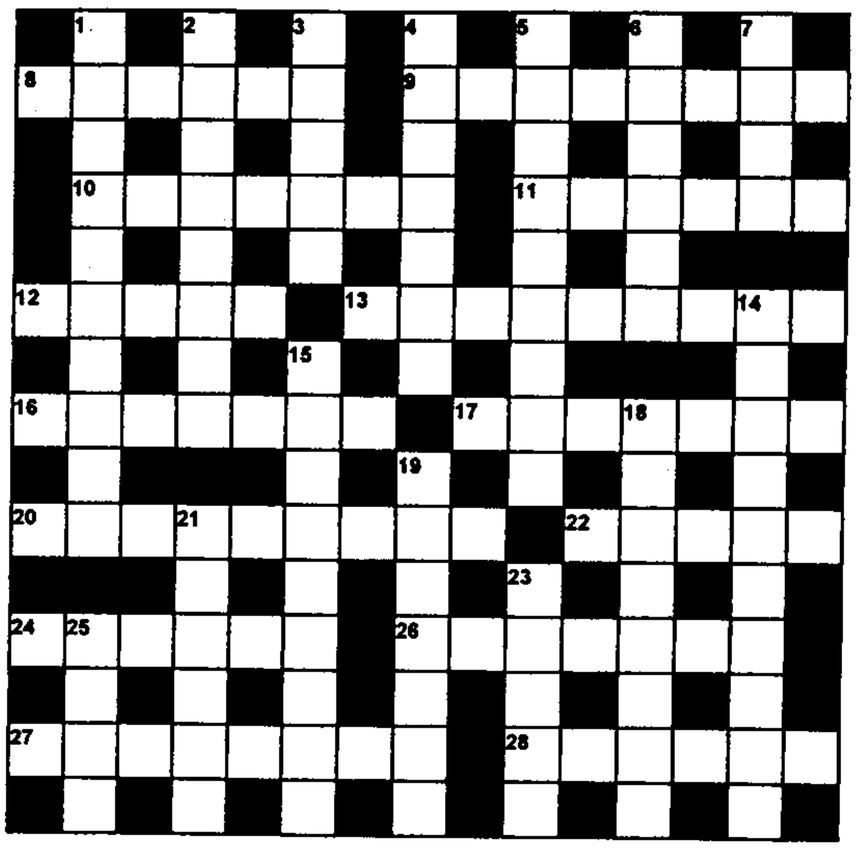
"She died in July, but apparently Chang had a dream in which she told him she was still alive and should on no account be buried. So for three months he's been sleeping with her corpse every night, and his teenage sons serve her three meals a day. He's also been paying a woman shaman to administer qigong treatment to the body twice a week. He says it's working, because oil is oozing out of her skin and a wound is healing, but the neighbours have been complaining to us about the stink of rotting meat. When we spoke to Chang, he at first became angry and accused the coroner of gross incompetence. But he eventually promised us that, if his wife has not revived by the end of the year, then he'll agree to bury her. So you see, he's not completely unreasonable." *(Hong Kong Standard 19/10/96. Spotter — George Adams)*

COMPILED BY

Victor Lewis-Smith

EYE CROSSWORD 67

by Cyclops *£100 prize*



ACROSS

8 Member kept up bravely (6)
9 Just like Ms O'Connor entered by Kelvin and later injected with heroin (8)
10 'Hello sailor' inside crap furniture store (7)
11 Theatre Royal hack joins battle with Penny (6)
12 Corporation owner dripping with money paid into bank account regularly (5)
13 An opportunity, with lots of others, to get your member out and maybe get some action? (4,5)
16/22/21 In their bungling way, can't they see the funny side of screwing people for cash? (7,5,6)
17/28 Two Barbaras — old flames as far as Brenda's concerned? (7,6)
20 Currently to be found under Portillo, wife gets dodgy CIA offer (3,6)
22 (see 16)
24 Arsehole inadequate? Should keep you off the streets (6)
26 All people long to be disassociated from such a naff programme! (3,4)
27 Computer memory thieves' briefs (8)
28 (see 17)

DOWN

1 The president once responsible for Chelsea getting smashed and going round breaking law (4,6)
2 Fast mover, also known as 'Coach', is getting screwed (8)
3 Revolutionaries' sudden movements (5)
4 Hard to get in car, yes, where your butt gets crushed? (7)
5 Be horribly ill going round clubs — something the *Eye*'s familiar with! (5,4)
6 Definitive UN agency for old rockers (3,3)
7 She kept her head, making Norm run (4)
14 A model of inflation that satisfies some? (4-2,4)
15 Dummy who gets fired for failing to give MPs a rise? (3,6)
18 Dozy party member from Lewis (8)
19 Drug transport (7)
21 (see 16)
23 In the middle of Cher arrangement model has to vomit (5)
25 Part of your member left inside woman (4)

£100 prize to first correct solution opened on 06.12.96. Entries to "Crossword", Private Eye, 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG.

Solution to Crossword No. 66

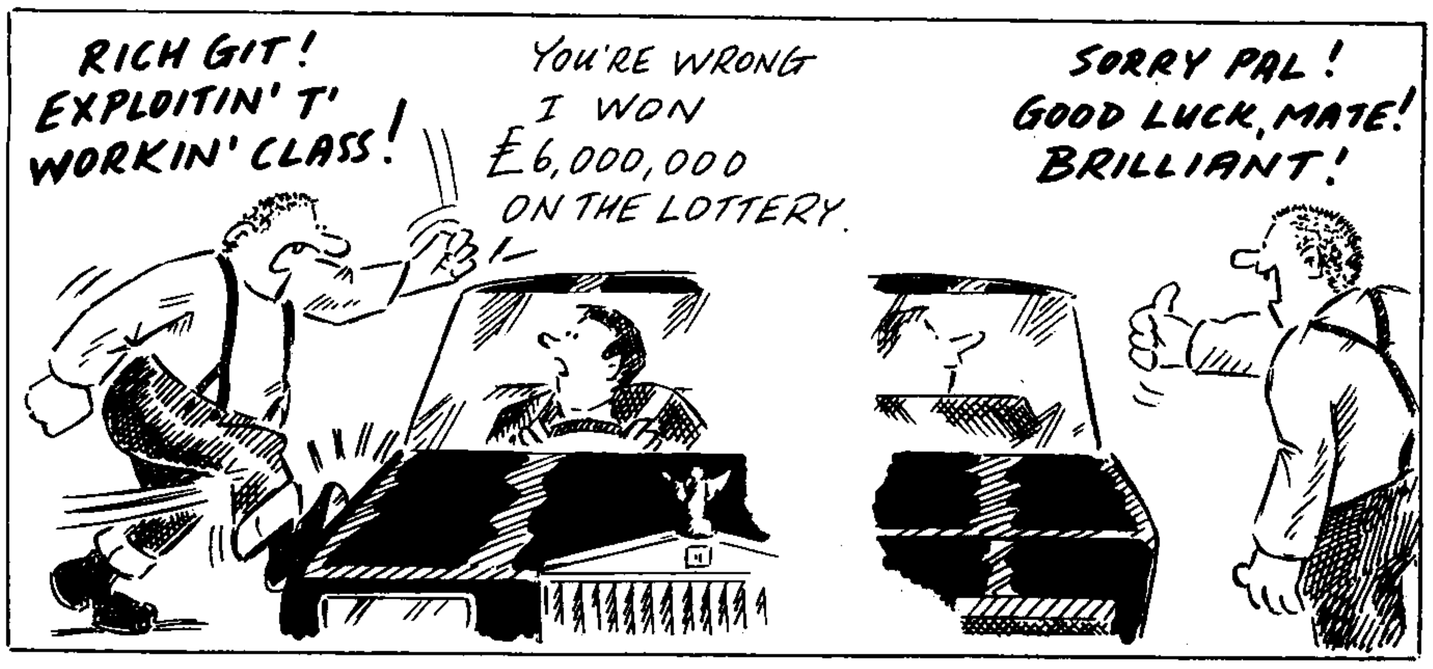
Winner: MARTIN WEIR

ACROSS: 7 Semi-pro 9 Old boy 10 Muesli 11 De Gaulle 12/15 Born-again Christian 14 E-type 16 Stuck up 17 Shadows 20 Goofy 22 Strippers 24 Junk mail 25 Tosser 27 Schism 28 Enacted.

DOWN: 1 Esau 2 Opting out 3 Boudoir 4 (see 8) 5 Adjust 6 World power 8/4 Masonic lodge 13 Out to lunch 15 (see 12) 18 Deposit 19 Stalker 21 Fake it 23 Naomi 26 Ends.

The Lottery Winners

TURNER



PETER McLIE

THE COLUMN THAT PACKS HIS BAGS AT PUNCH

WE DON'T hear much about Fergie these days, do we? If I were her I would write a book. Not that she needs the money of course, but it would help to bring her back into the spotlight. After all, how many stories of happy marriages are there for us to enjoy? *Break* the silence Your Royal Highness and spill the beans!

❑HAS anyone seen what was in the paper yesterday? Not very interesting was it? Particularly not for people looking for ideas for columns.

❑HAS anyone read the column above? Not very interesting was it? I blame the papers for failing to provide anything interesting in them!

HERE are my predictions for next month's budget. I forecast that Mr Lamont will either:
a) Raise taxes
or
b) Bring them down.
Whichever happens I will eat my hat if I am wrong.

❑SOMEONE has stolen all the leaves from the tree in my garden. I have rung the police to tell them but they have done nothing. The burglar was in such a hurry that he left most of them on the ground.

Surely it is not beyond the wit of our boys in blue to nab the offenders? Isn't life dandy?

I HAVE a new idea for making a lot of money very quickly. It's called the sack. You get it if you're no good at your job but if you're canny you make sure that you get a vast pay-off in order to get rid of you quickly. Isn't life 180 grandee?

Top Ten Films

"Cash"
Repulsive film about people getting their kicks from making money from auto-erotic films.

"Crass"
Repulsive film about people getting their kicks from loudly discussing very bad films at dinner parties.

"Creche"
Repulsive film about children left in care while their parents go to see a very bad film.

"Trash"
Repulsive film about Will Self writing about *Crash* in the Observer.

"Crashingly Boring"
(That's enough top ten films. Ed.)

BRILLO OF PAD GOES HOME

by Our Scottish Staff **Sharon Stone and Professor Norman Scone**

THE historic Brillo of Pad, long revered by the Scots as one of their most cherished relics was returned to Scotland yesterday amidst much rejoicing in England.

For over 10 years the Brillo has been embedded beneath the bottom of the so-called Dirty Digger and enshrined in Wapping.

Now at last, thanks to pressure by English campaigners, the Brillo is to be taken home with due ceremony to its native Edinburgh where it will be kept beneath the bottom of the Barclay Brothers.

The Brillo will be on show at the headquarters of the Scotsman Newspaper between 9am and 5pm (Mon to Sunday).

According to the ancient poem by Scottish Bard William Rees-McGonnagal:

Scotland can nae be truly glad
Till the homecoming of yon
Brillo of Pad.

The Brillo of Pad is 47.

CHUNNEL FIRE BLAMED ON 'RUBBISH'

by Our Conflagration Staff
Mohamed Al-Fire and Michael Coal

THE cause of the huge Channel Tunnel blaze was last night identified as the vast containers of unsold copies of the humorous magazine *Punch*.

It is understood that the copies had been returned from France after an attempt to give them away to lorry drivers blockading roads had failed.

Millions of copies had thus been tightly packed into special containers for transportation back to England, but it is believed that angry French readers, incensed by the poor quality of the product, may well have set fire to the material before the train entered the tunnel.

Said one expert who examined the wreckage: "It was a disaster waiting to happen. Sooner or later someone was bound to set fire to these copies."

Yesterday, however, emergency services were blamed for the speed of their response to the fire.

"They were far too quick to put the fire out," said a Chunnel spokesman. "We are now left with a soggy mass that will take years to clear up."

Peter MacKay is Fayed.

"A baseball cap cuts down the recognition factor by 50 per cent, but I'd kill for a new disguise" — Actor Hugh Grant.

Worcester Evening News

The Secret DIARY OF JOHN MAJOR aged 47 3/4

Monday

Today is another of the most historic days in the past six months. For the second time this year, I am declaring war on Europe due to being incandescent with rage over their latest edict. This is directive 93/104 which is one that says no one is allowed to work for more than 48 hours unless they want to. In my judgement this is typical totally unacceptable Brussels interference in the British way of life, and only two groups in the entire community are exempted from this bullying diktat, ie "all workers" and "everyone else". Well I have had enough. I do not intend to stand idly by while this country is being trampled over by Mr Herr Kohl. We all know what his little game is. He and his friends in Brussels are just trying to undermine the amazing success of our British industries, ie:

Samsung

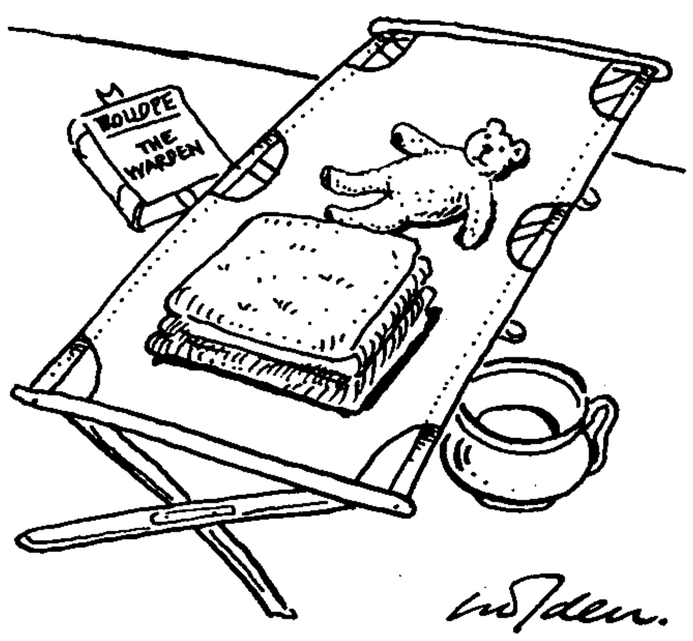
BMW (Rover) plc

Nissan (UK)

Cunard

Le Network Sud-Est

and many more too numerous to mention. Let Mr Kohl sort out his own problems before telling me that the British people are working too hard. Perhaps *he* should work harder! Oh yes. Let him make no mistake, this is *serious*. As I said to my wife Norman, "It is the great Beef War all over again." "So it's another one you're going to lose," she said, missing the point as usual owing to her preoccupation with freezing pieces of cheese.



Tuesday

This morning I gave orders for the reactivation of my famous War Room buried deep on the first floor of Downing Street. It contains the following vital war items:

1 camp bed

1 scrambler hot-line direct to the desk of Mr Heseltine

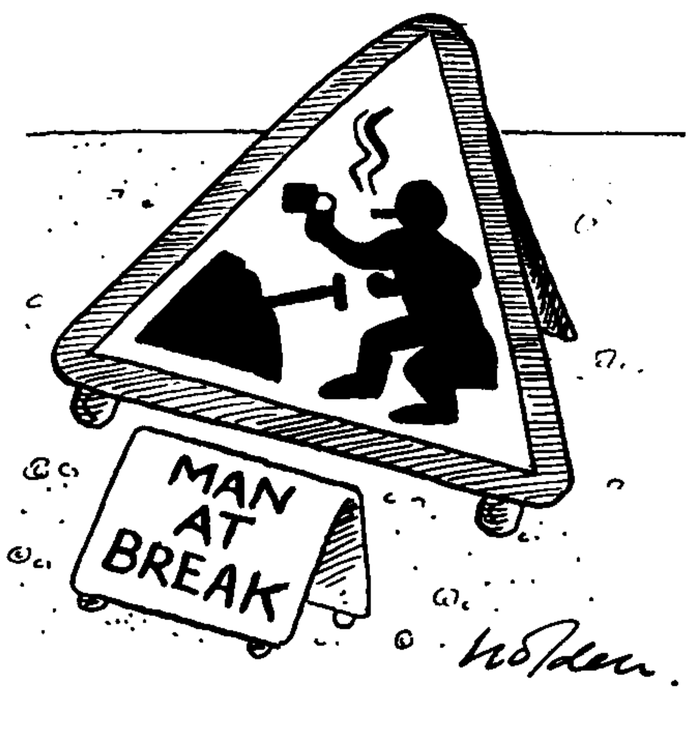
1 map of Europe, with pins and flags to show where we are not co-operating at any given moment.

(To save money for Mr Clarke's tax cuts we have used the same rulers that we used last time, only we have taken the plastic cows off the ends because this is not a Beef War but a war about working hours, and we could not think what we could use as an hour symbol.)

14 packs of Emergency Wartime Frozen Cheese Rations, prepared by N. Major.

1 cyanide capsule in the unlikely event of my falling into the hands of Herr Kohl's Euro-sturmtroopers.

This will show that I mean business.



Wednesday

It is still the lull before the storm. So far the long-awaited invasion of Britain by Herr Kohl has not begun. Meanwhile, as I told the Cabinet this morning, it is "business as usual". Mr Waldegrave, while he was handing round the biscuits, coughed and said: "I think I may have a brilliant idea for winning the election, prime minister. I have worked out what all Labour's election promises are going to cost. It comes to £29,000 billion trillion for every man, woman and child." "Good work," I told him. "I had exactly the same idea myself, but I did not have time to work out all the details because I have already done my 48 hours this week."

I then read out the details to the Cabinet who were open-mouthed in admiration at the brilliance of my idea.

1. Sabbaticals for nursery-school teachers. £10,000 million.

2. Re-nationalising ScotRail. £2,000 million.

3. Paying all unemployed people £800 a week for retraining as stress councillors. £18,000 million.

4. Huge grants to all Gay and Lesbian theatre groups (see article by Clare Short in New Statesman, October 1971). £20,000 million.

5. Compensation for all lottery losers. Estimated cost £17 million billion (twice weekly).

I of course checked with Mr Waldegrave that his figures were reliable. "Oh yes," he said, "I got them from Sir Robin Butler." "That's OK then," I said.

Thursday

The newspapers have got it wrong as usual. They are claiming that Mr Waldegrave got all his tax figures from Robin Butler! Where do they get these stories?

You are not allowed to use civil servants to make party political points. We Conservatives know this and Mr Waldegrave thinks we should ask Sir Robin to attack the Labour Party for suggesting otherwise. This is another of his very good ideas.

Friday

I am once again in no small measure incensed with rage at the speaker, Mrs Boothroyd, who has told me that I have to have a debate on the European currency. This is a very complicated issue which even I find it hard to understand (even though I do understand it. Oh yes). But to an ordinary MP it is far too difficult and therefore to have a debate would be pointless. You cannot debate something you do not understand and you might end up losing. So there will be *no* debate. Oh no.

Saturday

I have decided that there will be a debate on the European Currency. The 1922 Committee convinced me that this is an important issue and one which could mean a loss of British jobs, particularly my own. I have therefore asked Mr Clarke the Chancellor to defend my position in the Commons and he has said loyally that as soon as he works out what it is, he will get back to me.

Sunday

Mrs Thatcher has announced that she thinks I am doing a very good job as Prime Minister. Well! It has certainly taken her a long time to realise this! "I do not need Mrs Thatcher's help," I told my wife Norman. "No," she agreed. "You can lose the next election all on your own." She was clearly confused as she was busy mixing our frozen cheese mince pies at the time.

Monday

Mr Blair has been on Desert Island Discs. Once again, he is just copying me as I was on years ago. How pathetic he is! He is so out of touch that he did not even choose the 1950s' hit song "Shrimp Boats Are A-Coming In" by Alma Cogan as I did.

● ***The 5th & Ultimate Secret Diary of John Major*** **— now on sale, £4.99**

Isaac Newton discovers his feminine side

PUB games have always been a traditional part of an evening out, but at The Rising Sun they are trying something a little different.

The pub in West Town Road, Backwell, is hosting a b*** job competition as part of its Hallowe'en fancy dress evening.

Nailsea Admag

THE ALTERNATIVE ROCKY HORROR SERVICE BOOK

No. 94: A Service Of Thanksgiving To Almighty God For His Precious Gift Of Homosexuality (to be held in Southwark Cathedral by kind permission of the Rt Rev Cedric de Gayetrouser, Bishop of Southwark)

The President: Hullo.

All: Well, hullo.

The President: You may now give each other a Sign of Peace.

(All embrace their partners)

President: We shall now sing our first hymn, "Gay's My Soul, The King of Heaven".

INTERCESSIONS

President: Brothers and sisters, we are gathered here together to thank God for our sexual orientation.

All: We thank thee.

President: For the joy of moustaches, earrings and leather trousers.

All: We thank thee.

President: For the joy of cruising, cottaging and not to have the total nightmare of family life.

All: We thank thee.

(There shall here be a sermon given by a lesbian priestess)

Brothers and sisters. Aren't men awful? Except gay men, of course. They are great. But the one thing that really gets me going is the total homophobic intolerance of the Church throughout the ages, which has burnt gay men and women at the stake. And make no mistake, there are still loads of self-styled Christians today who would do the same again if they had the chance. And now let us celebrate our total hatred of homophobia by singing a hymn which has been specially written for this historic service.

HYMM

All things gay and beautiful
All creatures gay and small
All things gay and wonderful
Homophobes — we hate them all.

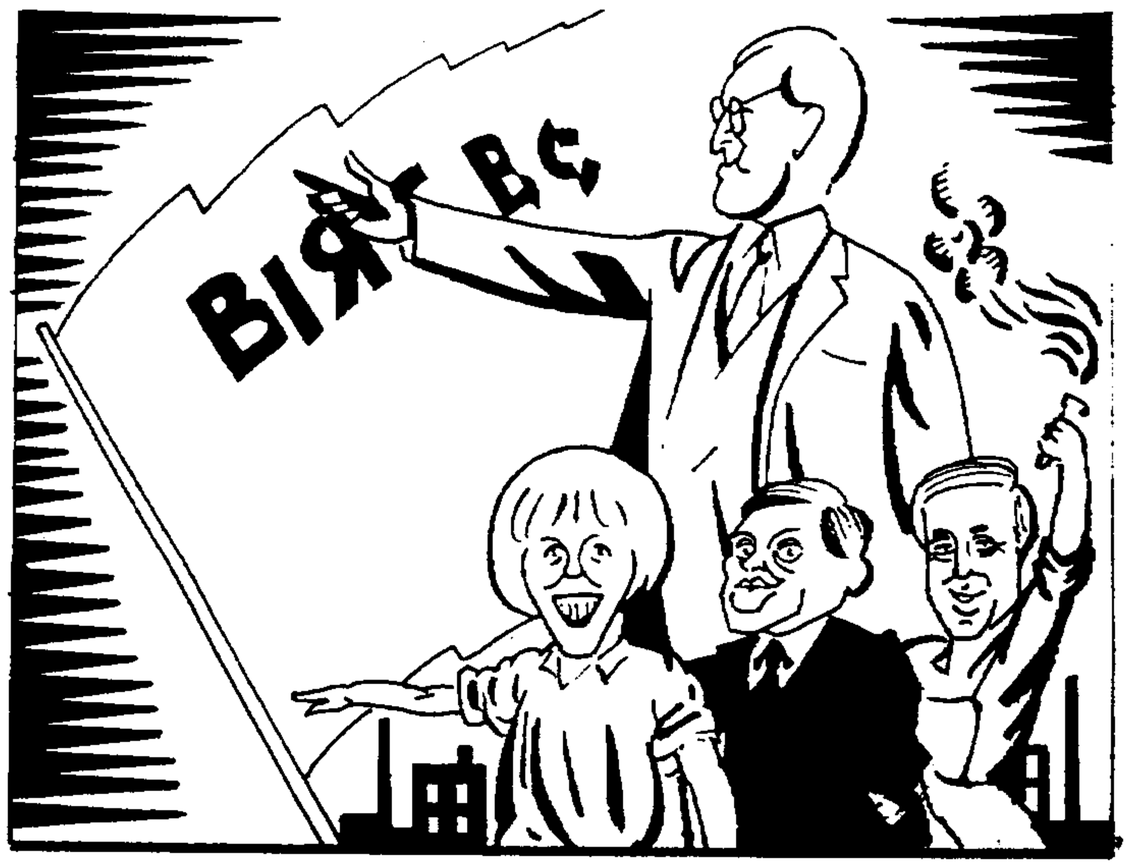
President: Go forth and do not multiply.

All: Amen.

Harry Enfield's **Class Bores** Drawn by **Michael Heath**

1. Teachers

"I blame the teachers for falling standards innit? I mean at Dale's school the teachers are SHIT jennerwadd I'm sayin'? I got a complaint from his English teacher the other day — she only said he's distracting the other kids and when she tells him to stop Dale's only gone 'Fuck off you ugly tart' and I ask Dale if he's done it and he's gone 'I never'. Now Dale don't lie, right? 'cos I've brought him up nice and properly jennerwadd I'm sayin'? so me and him goes to see the teacher and I says 'You callin' my son a liar? Fuck off' and she's only started crying! In front of *my* son! I mean, how's Dale gonna look up to a teacher if it starts blubbing all over the place? Jennerwadd I'm sayin'? It's demeaning, jennerwadd I'm sayin'? I mean in my day if we gave the teacher the lip we got caned jennerwadd I'm sayin'? Mind you I've told Dale if she ever lays a finger on him I'll slit the bitch and break her jaw — I mean that's her trouble she don't realise Dale's only mucking about 'cos he demands respeck and the ugly whore ain't giving him respeck. Jennerwadd I'm sayin'?"



Tributes to Comrade Birt flow in from all over BBC

Reprinted from the BBC House Magazine Birts & Birtmen

A 59-MINUTE standing ovation was accorded to the Great Helmsman, Comrade Kim Il Birt, by hundreds of thousands of loyal BBC workers on the occasion of the unveiling of Comrade Birt's Five-Year Plan For The Re-Organisation Of Management Structures And Corporate Directorates.

The proceedings were opened with a two-hour-long speech from Comrade John Simpson of the Foreign Affairs Unit, who praised the Great Leader's unswerving devotion to the Three Principles of Blandism-Birtism.

These principles, Comrade Simpson reminded his smiling co-workers, were:

1. Continual revolution in every department of the Corporation at all times.

2. Permanent stability through structural consolidation at the management-production interface.

3. Permanent employment of Myself at enormous salary commensurate with my status as Very Important Foreign Correspondent.

Wyatt Twerp

Comrade Simpson then attacked the "malicious hyenas and running dogs of the media who have dared to criticise the farsighted policies and actions of the Great Communicator, Our Beloved Comrade Birt."

Comrade Simpson's contribution was followed by a three-hour speech from Comrade Will Wyatt, the veteran Party ideologue and Grand Controller of the Internal Directorates.

Comrade Wyatt reminded his audience of the incredible achievements of Birtism, which had made the BBC what it was today.

He singled out for praise the following heroes of the Birtist Revolution:

- Comrade **Esther Rantzen**, for her fearless exposure of innocent people.
- Comrade **Peter Jay**, for his fearless exposition of the finer points of economic and monetary union.
- Comrade **Barry Norman**, for his fearless wry look at this week's New Releases.
- Comrade **Desmond Lynam**, for his fearless and revolutionary introductions to *Sportsnight*.
- Comrade **Christopher Evans**, Leader of the Birtist Youth Movement, for his fearless promotion of himself and for his tireless assault on the outmoded shibboleths of reactionary Auntie-ist bourgeois broadcasting under the slogan "Fart If You Think My Salary Should Be Trebled".

Comrades Behaving Badly

Comrade Yentob then took the floor and spoke for five hours on the theme of Comrade Birt's achievements in keeping him in his job.

Never before *(contd. p. 94)*

FULL TIME / PART TIME AIRCRAFT GROOMERS

★ You will be rewired to work as part of a team, grooming aircraft to the highest standards of cleanliness.

Recruitment advertisement, Evening Argus (Brighton)

COURT CIRCULAR

SIR JAMES'S PALACE, SW1

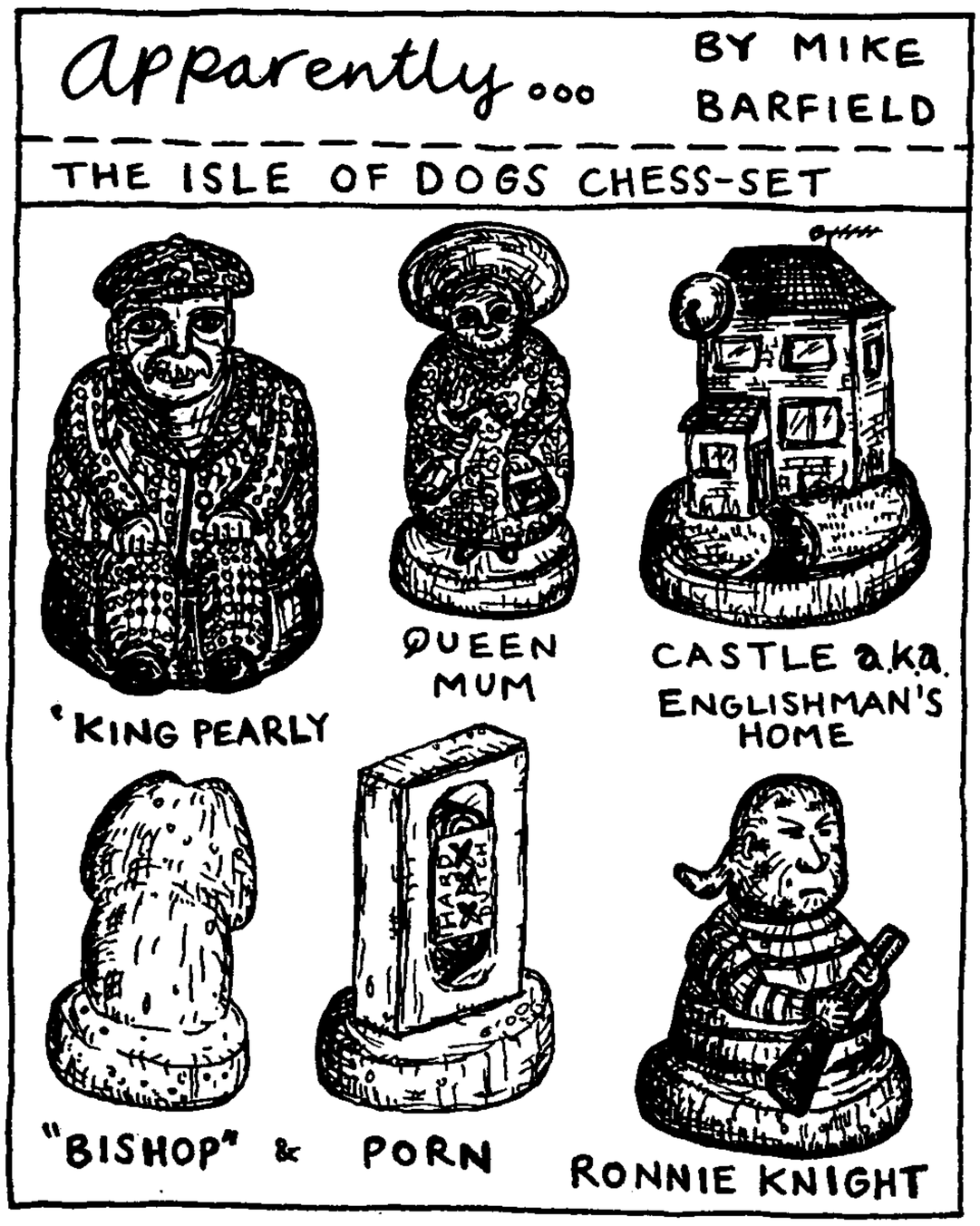
THE infant son of Prince Imran of Khan and HRH Princess Jemima of Puddleduck was today officially named as Sulaiman Ben Akhbar Tariq Buthelezi Cavenham-Bentinck. The naming ceremony was conducted according to the Islamic, Judaic and Zulu rites by the Mufti of Regent's Park, the Deputy Chief Rabbi of Mayfair and the Chief Witch Doctor of Kwa-Zulu, Mr John Aspinall. The godparents were Mr Conrad Black, Sir David Frostie, Mr James Slater-Walker, ex-HRH the Princess of Wales, Lady Annabel Stringfellow and Mr Claus Von Bulow (standing proxy for Lord Lucan). The reception was held at Tramp and afterwards at the Hacienda de la Referenda, Mexico.

Prince Sulaiman is 93rd in line to the Caliphate of Tashkent *(writes Hugh Montgomery-Mohamedsnob, the Garter-Rouge-Pursuivant-Triumph-Herald-Tribune)*. His descent has been traced back to the 8th century, as follows:

Caliph Suleiman the Magnificent
|
Genghis Khan
|
Tambourine the Great
|
Kubla Khan
|
Aga Khan
|
Aga Saga
|
Babur the Great
|
Babar the Elephant
|
Imran out most of the Pakistan team at the Oval 1983

King Solomon
|
Queen of Sheba
|
Sheba the Elephant
|
Zadok the Grocer
|
Saul Johnson
|
Sam Goldwyn
|
Sammy Goldsmith
|
Jammy Goldsmith
|
HRH the Princess Jemarmite

Prince Sulaiman



KNEE IN ALIEN DRAMA

by Our Man Watching The X-Files, **E.I. Erewego**

THE soccer world reeled in disbelief yesterday when Ron Knee, 59, Neasden FC's ashen-faced boss, admitted that 30 years ago he had been "contacted by men from Mars".

Talking exclusively to *Check-It-Out!*, the Asda SuperSaver Customer Magazine, the tight-lipped supremo confessed: "One night in 1966 I was just driving home from the Boston Arms after a pre-match tactical drink with the lads when I saw these incredible lights in front of me flashing red, yellow, green then red again.

Mars Bore

"The next thing I knew," continued the man they call Mr Neasden, "I had been abducted by men dressed in blue with strange pointed heads. They put me in the back of their craft and spoke to each other using a strange language. It was very difficult to understand, but I am sure one of them said 'Roger Wilco'.

"I knew then that the voice was telling me that if I signed up a player called Roger Wilco not only would we win the League but Neasden would go on to triumph in the FA Cup and the European Cup-Winners' Cup."

Police Car-lisle

Knee then told *Check-It-Out!*'s ace reporter Shamji Mishtak that he had spent thirty years searching for the elusive Wilco but sadly he was not to be found.

The aliens, he said, had held him captive in a small tiled room before eventually giving him a liquid drink that tasted "just like tea" and releasing him in the early hours of the morning.

Last night Knee said that he had not mentioned this incident before for fear that he would be branded a nutcase. Said Neasden fan Sid Bonkers: "He is a nutcase."

LATE SCORE

UFO Neasden 0
Dollis Hill 1
(Roger Wilco [o.g.])

MAN OF MATCH: Neasden's Roger Wilco, exciting new signing from Mars.

MEDICAL BRIEFING

Dr Thomas Stuttaford

Why do we hear voices?

IT IS not uncommon for those suffering from occupational stress to undergo hallucinations in which they imagine external voices are speaking to them. Footballers in particular are known to be particularly prone to irrational suggestions but one has only to think of Joan of Arc *(cont. p.94)*

MEDICAL BRIEFING

Dr Thomas Stuttaford

Why do I write so many pieces?

It is not unusual for members of the medical profession such as myself to hear voices on the telephone offering them large sums of money in exchange for quasi-medical pieces on topical events.

Most doctors ignore the voices, but I *(continued on all other pages)*

UNTIL now, sports car enthusiasts were denied the option of a truly advanced, but affordable sequential shit transmission option.

The Champion (Southport)

ADVERTISEMENT

Palace Pictures in association with The Taxpayer present

Fergie HAWN *Diana* KEATON

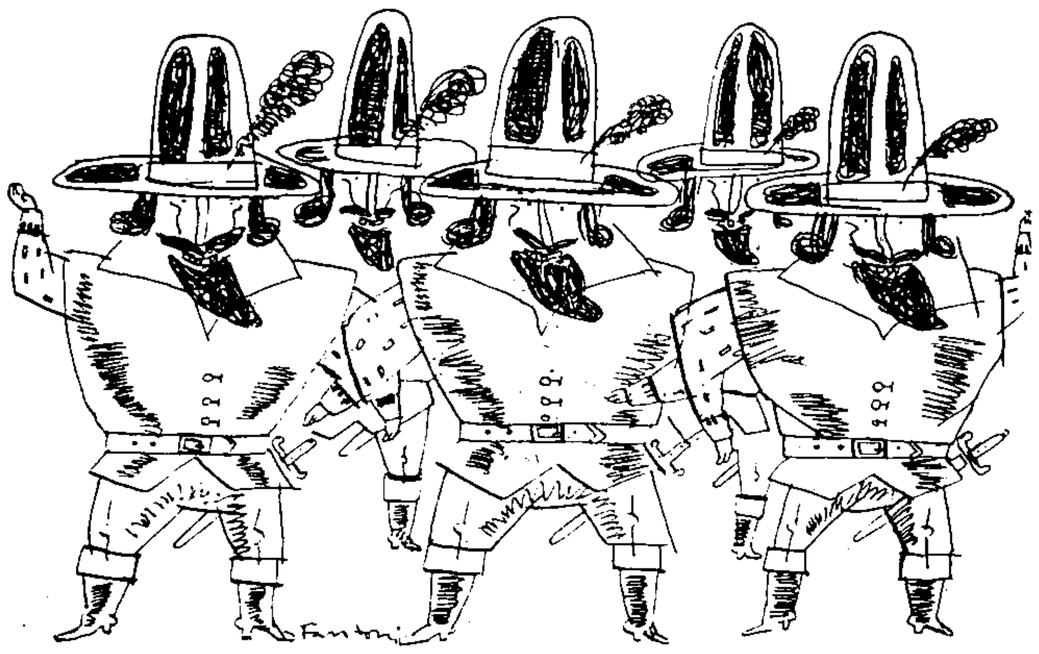
The FIRST WIVES *Club*

Don't get mad. Get everything.

A hilarious comedy that tells the story of two crazy women who decide they won't take any more. And then take the lot! Already a huge hit in the States.

Certificate £18 million

Coming soon to a television near you.



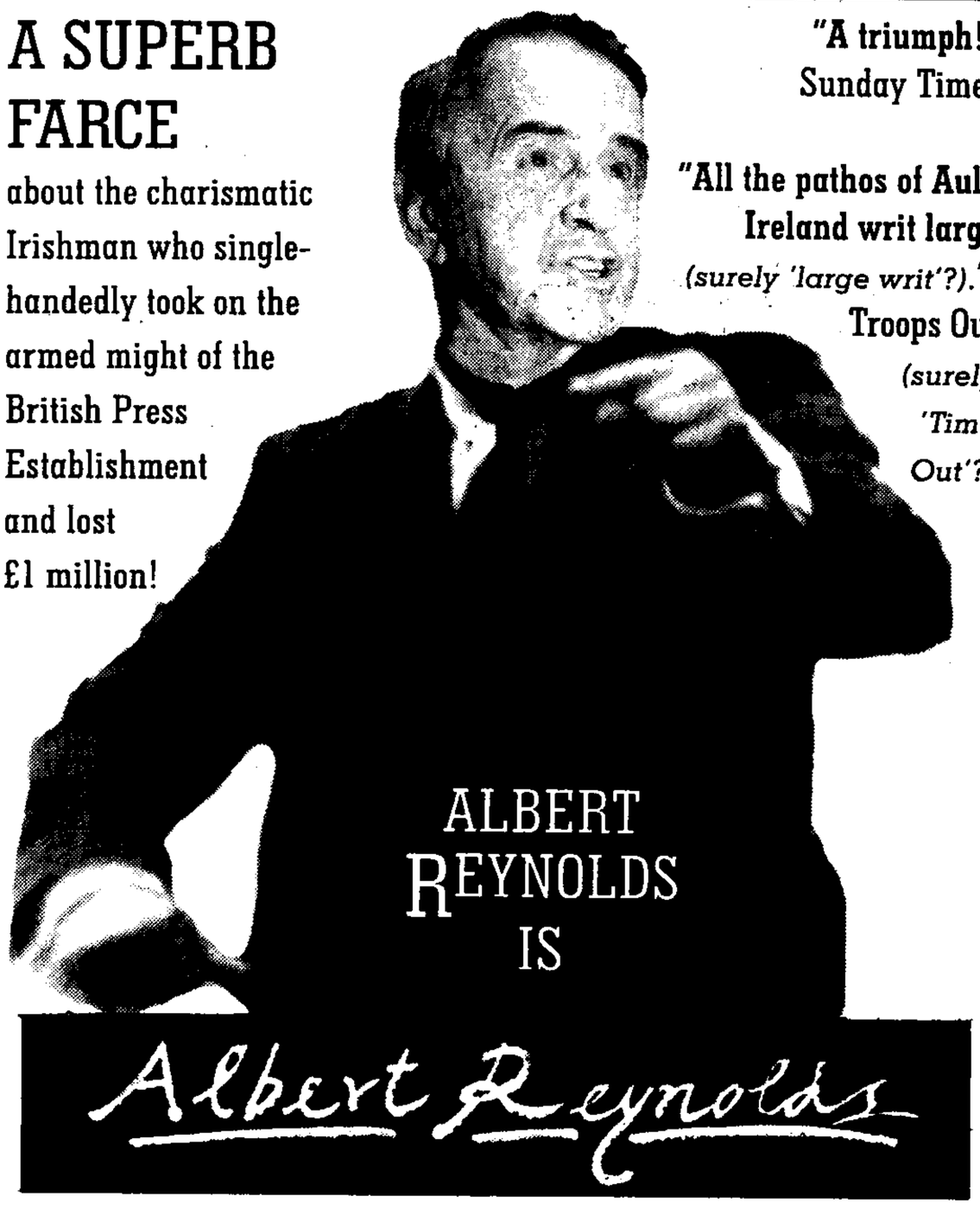
Five Guys Named Guy

ADVERTISEMENT

WINNER WORST ACTOR AND SHIFTIEST POLITICIAN AWARD

A SUPERB FARCE

about the charismatic Irishman who single-handedly took on the armed might of the British Press Establishment and lost £1 million!



"A triumph!" Sunday Times

"All the pathos of Auld Ireland writ large *(surely 'large writ'?)*." Troops Out *(surely 'Time Out'?)*

ALBERT REYNOLDS IS

Albert Reynolds

From the Referendum Bunker

Bulletin No.94

Achtung!

So. Mr Major-Bond. You have seen my amusing advertisements in the newspapers. No?

I have told the British people that you are impotent. Ha, ha, ha.

So much for your carefully cultivated image as the great sex symbol, Mr Bond.

(Holds up copy of the Daily Mail)

You are not laughing, Mr Bond?

Of course, I have proved to the world that I am not impotent.

(Holds up another copy of Daily Mail with front-page headline above picture of the Princess Jemima Puddlefish and His Magnificence The Imran Of Khan, reading "Royal Baby born – Referendum Party membership soars to two")

You see, Mr Major, as my friend Mrs Thatcher would say: "We are a grandfather."

(Strokes white baby and hands it to Greek male nurse)

Take it away, Nurse Taki, it is time for my successor, Suleiman, to have his Marmite.

But for you, Mr Bond, there will be no refreshments. No rest.

My mighty army is gathering new recruits by the day. I cannot think of any at the moment. But rest assured you will be the first to know.

And now I must retire to prepare my next media campaign, where once again I will show you up as the sad, weak, pathetic, impotent little fool that you are. Never a difficult task.

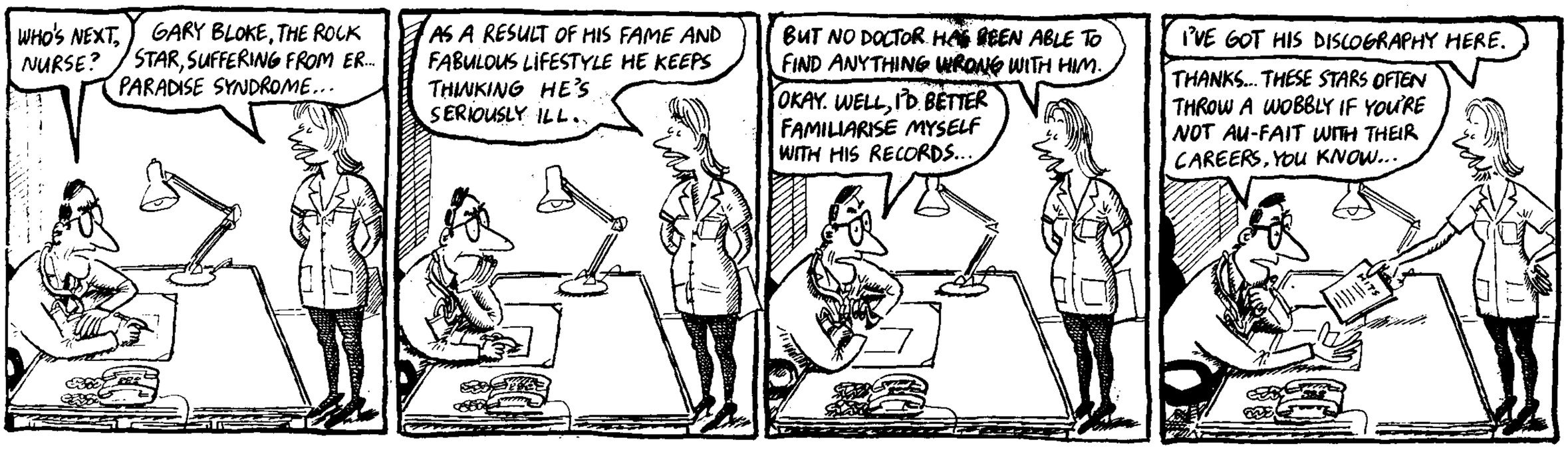
(Trapdoor opens beneath Major's feet plunging him into giant toilet filled with man-eating sharks, courtesy of the John Aspinall Sharka-The-Zoo-Loo Experience, Folkestone)

Issued by the Referendum Party of Great Britain

(Theme tune to this advertisement, 'From Mexico With Money', was played by the Peter de Savary Strings with solo by Jessye Norman Tebbit)

Celeb

LIGGER


WHO'S NEXT, NURSE?
GARY BLOKE, THE ROCK STAR, SUFFERING FROM ER... PARADISE SYNDROME...
AS A RESULT OF HIS FAME AND FABULOUS LIFESTYLE HE KEEPS THINKING HE'S SERIOUSLY ILL..
BUT NO DOCTOR HAS BEEN ABLE TO FIND ANYTHING WRONG WITH HIM.
OKAY. WELL, I'D BETTER FAMILIARISE MYSELF WITH HIS RECORDS...
I'VE GOT HIS DISCOGRAPHY HERE.
THANKS... THESE STARS OFTEN THROW A WOBBLY IF YOU'RE NOT AU-FAIT WITH THEIR CAREERS, YOU KNOW...

Daily Mail
GOOSEPAPER OF THE YEAR 35p

HATTERSLEY KILLER DOG IN LABOUR ROYAL MURDER

by Our Man In The Park
RAY GOSLING

THERE WAS no mistaking the look of sheer terror on the face of innocent cuddly toddler Goose B (whose name cannot be revealed for legal reasons) as the bloodthirsty former Labour Deputy Leader released his homicidal Rottweiler, Jaws, in St James Royal Park last week.

Seconds later the innocent gosling was a mass of bloody feathers while the dog's owner chuckled and gave him a chocolate chewy.

Make no mistake, this is what lies in store for Britain when Labour *(cont. p. 94)*

ON OTHER PAGES: Vote Conservative

BRITISH STREETS TO CHARGE ADMISSION

by Our Heritage Staff
Victoria and Albert Museum

THE Heritage Secretary, Mrs Virginia Bottomley, today announced that from next Sunday it would be necessary to charge an entrance fee for all Britain's streets.

Opponents of the scheme claimed that the British public already owns the streets and furthermore pays substantial taxes for their upkeep. But Mrs Bottomley rejected these arguments as "dated, out-moded and completely right".

She continued: "People who want to use our streets should have to pay. The streets may be part of our nation's heritage, but they are very expensive to maintain and the money raised from admission charges could be used to fund more important projects such as share option schemes for directors of privatised utilities."

The British Museum is 238 years old.

LAST NIGHT'S TV

BBC1 **Wax Meets Fergie**

LAST night we saw the most vulgar and embarrassing display ever given by a woman on television. Loudmouthed and unstoppable, she plumbed new depths in the chat-show interview.Make no mistake Ruby Wax is the most *(cont. p.94)*

MEDICAL BRIEFING

Dr Thomas Stuttaford

Is Ruby mad?

The hyper-active behaviour of some television presenters is often an indication of artificial stimulants of one kind or another. Sometimes even the humble cup of tea can alter the presenter's chemical balance and leave them behaving in an accelerated *(cont. p.94)*

POETRY CORNER

In Memoriam
***Mastermind*, the BBC Television Quiz**

So. Farewell
Then
Mastermind.

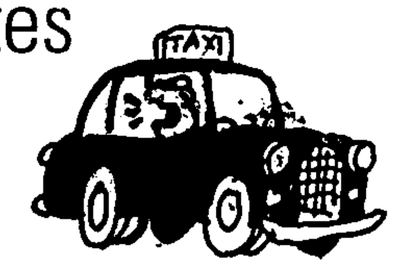
You have
Started.

And now
You have
Finished.

E.J. Thribb (17½ and no passes)

BABY CAR seat, £10. Baby, £5. Moses basket with covers and stand, £30.
Jersey Evening Post

A Taxi-Driver writes



Every week a well-known cabbie is asked to comment on an issue of topical importance.

This week: Hand-Gun Legislation by **Monty Mirror** (Cab No. 732748)

Do you see those MPs who voted against banning the guns? What a bloody disgrace! Right in front of the mothers who lost their kids! Bastards! They can't have no feelings in their bodies can they? Honestly, I ask you. What kind of respect is that for the dead?

There's only one way to deal with people like that. Line 'em up against the wall and shoot 'em. It's the only language they understand. I 'ad that David Mellor in the back of the cab once. He gave me a CD. Nice bloke…

NEXT WEEK: **Reg Snozzer** *on why the Frogs are to blame for the Chunnel fire.*

SUPERMODELS

KERBER

HOLLYWOOD DIVORCE ATTORNEY
SOMEONE SHOULD BE ACTING FOR YOU, PAMELA
HOLLYWOOD DIVORCE ATTORNEY + CAREER ADVICE
BECAUSE YOU'RE NOT VERY GOOD AT IT

DIARY

Mohamed Al Fayed: Before we fakhin start, let me say I thin man, okay, very, very thin man. They say I fat, my enemies they say Al Fayed fat, I not fat, my enemies fat, they all fakhin fat, I tell you why they fat, they fat because they eat my Harrods food hall fakhin goodies I give them free, that's why they so fakhin fat. But Al Fayed is thin, you tell them he thin, Michael, you tell it like it is, you straight the fakhin record set, fakh them pigshits.

Michael Cole: Through the good aegis of your columns, may I point out that Mr Mohamed Al Fayed, whom I have known and admired for many years, cuts an exceptionally svelte figure as he glides on tip-toe through the many luxurious Harrods departments distributing gifts to the poor and needy. Far from his being on the "plump" side — a malicious and potentially libellous rumour put about by his enemies, many of them now languishing in gutters, Mr Al Fayed is admired throughout the world for his remarkably lean quality. A couple of historical facts — attested on record by four prosperous witnesses, including a distinguished nightclub bouncer, a leading figure in the world of debt enforcement and the owner of a chain of highly-regarded casinos in Swindon and surrounding areas — must serve to get the record straight.

Now aged 47, Mr Al Fayed can look back on a career which saw him capture the title of Most Beautiful Male Body in the World sometime in the early 1970s, somewhere out East. His waist — measured regularly by leading statisticians — now comes in at a sprightly 28in — remarkably thin for a man of his age (45). Only last month, at a reception for Harrods' new gold-embossed Vertical Take-Off Jump-Jets at Kensington Palace hosted by the Princess of Wales, paid for by Mr Al Fayed, catering by Harrods, the Princess — looking never lovelier in an off-white ballgown with satin fringe — swept up to Mr Al Fayed and gasped, "Mohamed, poppet — you must be the thinnest person here! How do you do it?"

Mr Al Fayed's enemies deep in the heart of this corrupt Government may have suggested that recent photographs show a significant bulge at waist level beneath his exquisitely-tailored Harrods own-brand suits. I am told these photographs may have been doctored at senior level by MI5. I do not know. But what I do know is that Mr Al Fayed often wears clothes for the

MOHAMED AL FAYED with his trusty PR MICHAEL COLE

fuller figure so that he may hide Harrods gifts there, for later distribution to crippled children, his photographic schedule permitting.

Mohamed Al Fayed: Yeah, you tell em fakh off, fakhin pigshits, bad people, terrible crooks, show them Al Fayed is sophisticated man, he know how to write swanky, real swanky, commas, stop-fulls, the lot, and you sign that letter "Yours fakhoffly Mohamed Al Fayed". I say fakh them all, that's what I say.

I like the Queen, nice woman, very nice woman, very good friend, for me is diamond you know, is jewel, she no bullshit, if she hear word against Al Fayed she say, "You can fakh off you fakhin shit, Mohamed good man, Mohamed my friend."

God Save the Queen, and He will, Al Fayed tell Him to, He take many gifts off Al Fayed, God owe Al Fayed favour. Queen very nice lady. So how much she cost, Michael? We talking day-rate here. I want Queen at Harrods sharp for 9.30 opening, I want her on perfume counter, I want her modelling latest fashions, I want her in soft furnishings, I want her on fakhin sausage counter in food halls, all time with Mohamed beaming at her side. What she ask for that? Help her image, too. People no more say, "She lazy fat bitch that Queen, she no do nothing just take bribes", no, people say, "She work with her hands, she common touch, Majesty friend Mohamed, is good." You write fancy fakhkin letter to Majesty, Michael, tell her get round here snappish or it's finito for the Palace, okay?

Michael Cole: *"Your Majesty, It is my most heartfelt hope and wish that you should honour my humble Harrods Department Store of Knightsbridge with your gracious presence at your earliest convenience, theretofore extolling the delights of the very best of British commerce to the world at large, all proceeds to charity. I remain, Ma'am, ever your most humble and obedient servant, The Hon. Mohamed Al Fayed, OBE.*

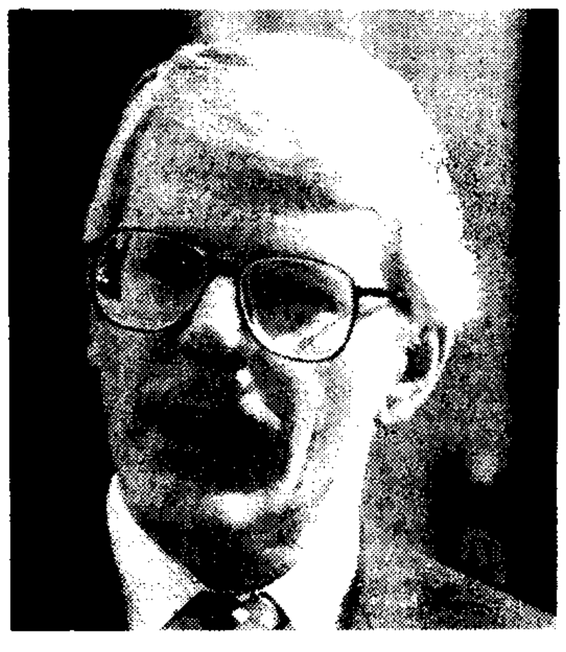
"P.S. I enclose a Gold Voucher, redeemable for a three-night midweek stay for two, at the Le Ritz Hotel, Paris, meals included, no questions asked, Range Rover to follow."

Mohamed Al Fayed: Shit-hot letter, my man. Everybody want take Harrods from me, fakh them, but not with Queen as hostage, no way, Queen nice lady, Queen my sister. Fakhin Establishment — pwah! — they crook, they bad person, I spit on the graves of their mother, they think Al Fayed not posh, that what they think, I tell them what I think, I think Al Fayed he posher than lot of them, he know how to talk proper, he know manners, he fancy dressier, no need buy their fakhin shit. You tell them that, Michael, you write letter from Mohamed to top people's paper, you tell them, Al Fayed no need your Establishment crap, he better born than lot of you, fakh it.

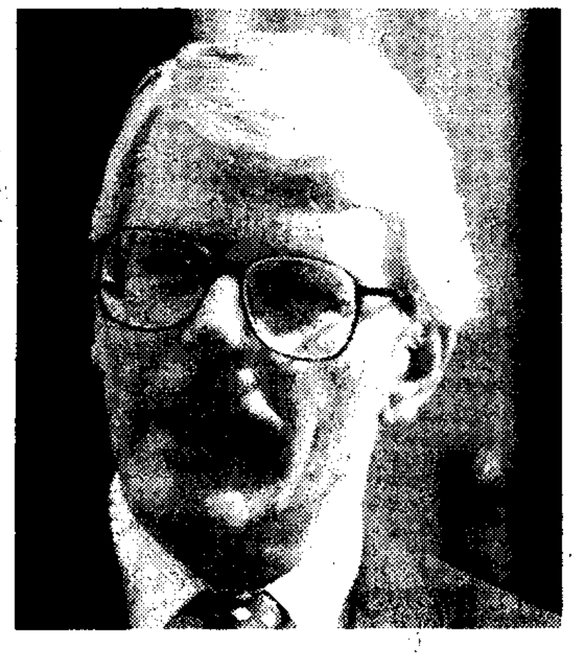
Michael Cole: *"Sir, Many hard things have been said about me, but it is cruel beyond measure to imply that I am in any way seeking acceptance by 'the British Establishment'.*

"Why should I have need of such blandishments? I am first and foremost a family man, and a Royal family man at that, being first cousin of her Majesty the Queen, and a blood relative of over six hundred different Dukes and two thousand English Earls. Following extensive blood-tests by accredited physicians, my wife has established beyond question that she is a half-sister of HRH Princess Anne, as well as first cousin of the Princess of Wales. Furthermore, my solicitors possess signed statements from reliable witnesses to the effect that I am not only Honorary Chairman of the Garrick Club and Master of Trinity College Cambridge, but also, without wishing to boast, Her Majesty's Lord Lieutenant of Scotland. With all this, who could want more?

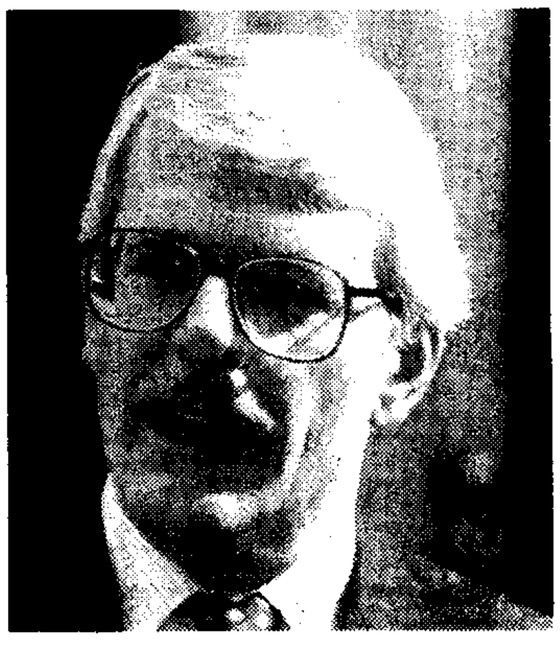
"Yours faithfully, Lord M. Al Ponsonby-Fayed (39), Harrods, Knightsbridge."



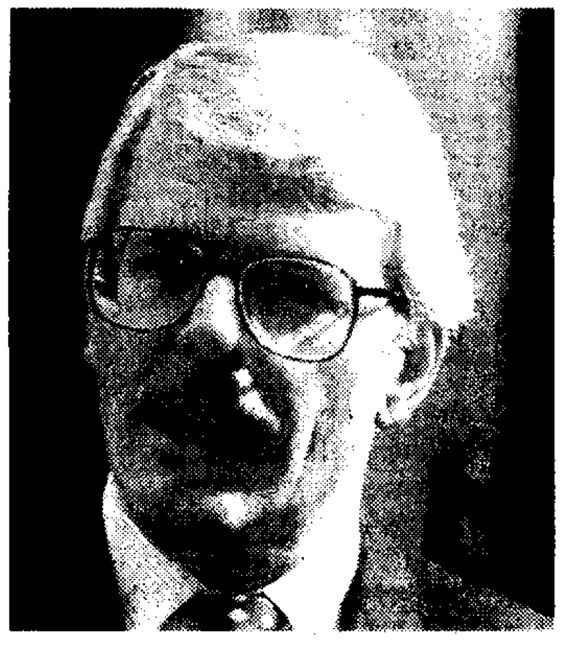
We are going to stop the sale of guns...



... in case they fall into the hands of homicidal maniacs...



...except of course...



...in Rwanda

Literary Review

Morse coda

Death Is Now My Neighbour
Colin Dexter
(Macmillan, £16.99)

MOST TV adaptations are travesties. Or at least reductions. Where a novel invites the reader's creative collaboration, television ploddingly specifies. The hero looks like this. The setting looks like that. Nothing, down to the smallest prop and the last extra in the background, can be left undetermined. So the accidentals take over and no imaginative participation is demanded.

Of course, it's a great scam for the dim and the lazy, which we all become towards the end of the day. Think how much mental labour is saved us by every single production team! And just occasionally an adaptation has enough life of its own to outstrip the original.

Inspector Morse is the classic instance. The screenplays by Julian Mitchell, the mumming by John Thaw and Kevin Whately, and the neat filming, have created a product distinctly superior to Colin Dexter's original novels. For they were never that good when he began them back in 1975. Now they're extraordinarily bad.

It's understandable perhaps. Morse has been screened for nearly ten years now. Last November, *The Way Through the Woods* got more than 16 million viewers, the highest ever figure for a single drama. This year's ration, *The Daughters of Cain*, has been trailed more mercilessly than any other programme, ever. Inevitably, Dexter's characters are no longer his own. Morse is now John Thaw, willy nilly. Originally, in the books Lewis was Welsh and nearing retirement age. Now he's Kevin Whately, young and Geordie. Dexter has got no choice. Whatever he does, he can't write novels any more, only novelisations of yet unmade programmes.

Crying all the way to the bank, he must be. The power of television is such that, however dud, no Morse novel now could be less than a best-seller. Morse is up there with Delia, Rolf Harris, Reeves and Mortimer and the X-Files: an infallible. But apparently Dexter's been tempted to test that law to destruction. It's the only rational explanation for the reeking tedium of *Death Is Now My Neighbour*. He's seeing just how bad he can be and still get away with it.

The plot is almost superhumanly dreary. There's an election going on for the mastership of an Oxford college. One of the candidates, married to a former stripper, is being blackmailed by a seedy Oxford journalist. At the start, a woman is accidentally murdered instead of the blackmailer. At the regulation two-thirds of the way through, the blackmailer himself is finally topped. Guess who did it? That's right. But Morse only gets there after 350 pages of twaddle about alibis and initials.

Never mind. Even this story could be enjoyably told. Unfortunately Dexter's chosen style is Pompous Old Git. So Morse doesn't look around, he goes on a "peripatetic reconnaissance". He doesn't take a walk, he has "a short perambulation". He doesn't do things as usual, he does them "as was ever his wont".

People don't say good morning, they exchange a "matutinal greeting". Things aren't next to each other, they're "adjacent". A man isn't fat, he's "of considerable corpulence", a joke is a "pleasantry", a pub a "hostelry", and "where" is never used when "whereon" or "wherein" can be substituted. Dexter's way of telling the reader to pay attention is to write: "Yet it would have warranted no inclusion in this chronicle had it not been that one or two of the details recorded herein were to linger significantly..."

So Dexter just can't write. Never mind. Perhaps Morse himself remains such an amusing character that he overcomes all these drawbacks? Unfortunately not. The demands of instant recognisability on television are severe. Fitz is the fat one, Tennison's the slag, and Morse — at the upper limits of complexity in this context — drinks, listens to classical music and does crosswords. That's all, so he has to do each one of them over and over and over again.

He drinks Burton, he drinks Bass, he drinks Brakspear's, he drinks Glenfiddich, he drinks Glenmorangie, he drinks London Pride, he drinks Tadcaster, to mention only a few. The first time around you quite enjoy these familiar characteristics cropping up once again. By the fifteenth, never mind the fiftieth, you're begging for mercy.

At one extraordinary moment, Dexter actually owns up to his plight, poor sod. Halfway through, Morse hasn't yet cracked the case and as Dexter puts it: "Morse was beginning to feel increasingly worried about his present failure — like some hitherto highly acclaimed novelist with a score of bestsellers behind him who is suddenly assailed by a nightmarish doubt about his ability to write that one further winner; by a fear that he has come to the end of his creative output..." Who on earth can Colin Dexter have been thinking of? Now, *there's* a puzzle, if you like.

BOOKS & BOOKMEN

☐ AFTER the departure of explosive Richard Charkin and incandescent John "Ocker" Potter, Reed Books seemed to be regaining calm under Sandy Grant.

But that was until four weeks ago when John Mellon — from parent company Reed Elsevier sacked Grant for, laughably, lacking leadership qualities.

Mellon forgot to tell anyone at Reed Books what he'd done, and Grant had to round informing his late colleagues of his demise. Perhaps this was as well as the grammar, syntax and English of Mellon's memos invariably cause much tittering in Michelin House.

The absurd Mellon has replaced Grant with John Hallaran, a former chief executive of British Printing Company who was axed from BPC when he failed to lead the firm to a successful stock market flotation.This makes him an ideal person to fatten up Reed Books for sale after this year's failure to find a buyer at almost any price.

Meanwhile, the architect of Reed Books, the great Paul Hamlyn, has vowed that he'll have "King" Mellon out of his job.

■ *THERE have been entertaining scenes of queeniness at HarperCollins where "Professor" Stuart Proffitt, has been feeling threatened. After the departure some months ago of likeable David Young to Little Brown, the position of supremo of the trade division was up for grabs. Malcolm Edwards fancied it and also fancied being the new deputy managing director.It looked last week as if he'd got it but Professor Proffitt, editor to Lady Thatcher and Jeffrey Archer, said he'd resign. Malc however went further and actually did resign. This was serious enough for even HarpicCollins to react and New Worldwide Supremo Anthea Disneyland ordered Eddie "McBastard" Bell to sort it out without losing either ego. After a long delay an announcement has been made that although Malc has become deputy managing director the Professor is of equal status. No one knows quite what this classic piece of corporate indecision and fudge actually means.*

☐ LITERARY agent Caradoc King of A.P. Watt has just pulled off a great trick. Cunning Caradoc knew that publishers no longer have time to read as they're either at lunch, in meetings or partying. Why then send them the complete manuscript of a first novel, particularly as — em — the author hasn't written it yet? Why not send them six pages, if — em — that is all the author is prepared to own up to having written? If the author is young, female, incredibly pushy and Irish, sleight of hand might well be achieved.

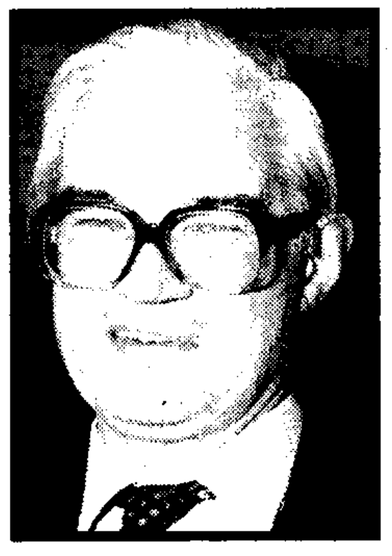
Caradoc, having read the six pages, summoned literary journalist and would-be novelist Antonia "Kylie Minogue" Logue over from Dublin, thrust her into a limousine and sent her on a sight-seeing tour of London's more gullible publishers.

Cape, Granta and Little Brown each offered over £50,000 but Bloomsbury acquired the rights to the six pages and, presumably, the rest of the first novel for a modest £56,000.

'Bookworm'

footnotes

THE SON ALSO SINKS



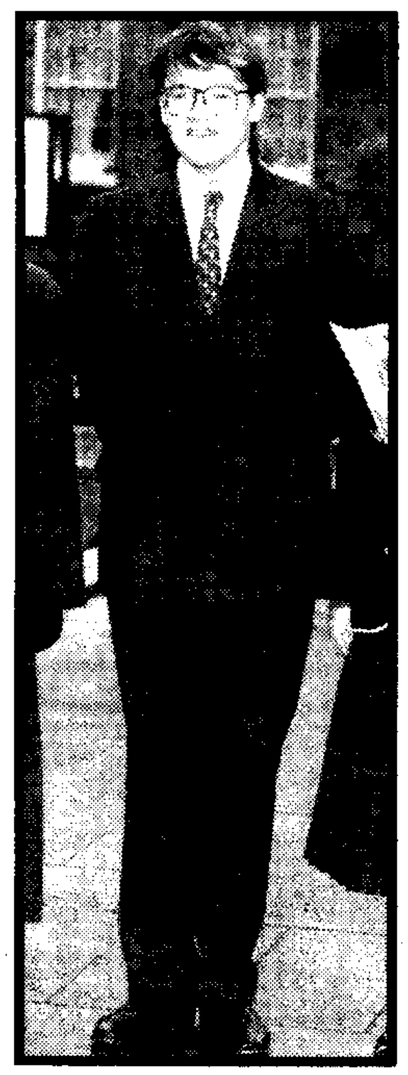
SIR DAVID MITCHELL MP

BY FAR the most influential political dynasty in the House of Commons is that of Mitchell & Son: Sir David Mitchell, 63, Tory MP for Hampshire North West, and his son Andrew Mitchell, 40, Tory MP for Gedling and social security minister. Both have been policing the biggest scandal of this parliament: the Hamilton affair.

In late June 1994 it was becoming obvious that the Commons might have to investigate the famous freebie enjoyed by Neil Hamilton, Tory MP for Tatton, and his wife at the Ritz Hotel in Paris in 1987. The *Guardian* had revealed the previous October that Hamilton's visit, which he did not declare, cost the Ritz's owners, Harrods boss Mohamed Fayed and his brother Ali, a cool £4,000.

Suddenly, for no apparent reason, Dr Charles Goodson Wickes, the mild Tory MP for Wimbledon, was kicked off the Commons select committee on members' interests. Into his place stepped Andrew Mitchell, then a junior whip.

A committee investigation became certain four months later when the *Guardian* of 20 October 1994 alleged that Mohamed Fayed, through parliamentary lobbyist Ian Greer Associates, had paid Hamilton thousands of pounds in cash and vouchers; and that Hamilton had asked questions on the Fayeds' behalf.



ANDREW MITCHELL: named "Britain's best pressed MP 1993"

Liberal Democrat MP Alex Carlile asked the committee to investigate both the visit to the Paris Ritz and the cash and vouchers. The committee started its hearings on 22 November, in secret. They lasted until May 1995. Throughout, Mitchell Jnr organised the Tories on the committee in a cover-up of monumental proportions. His position was unprecedented. He was a member of a government sitting on a supposedly independent committee investigating the conduct of a former government colleague.

At once, the Tory strategy became clear. They would investigate the minor technicality of Hamilton's undeclared Ritz freebie, and refuse to investigate the much more serious corruption charges about cash and vouchers. These matters, the committee whined, could play a part in the libel action brought by Hamilton against the *Guardian* and were therefore "sub judice". This was absolute nonsense. Libel is a civil, not criminal, matter, and parliament is the highest court in the land. MPs can investigate anything they like, regardless of civil actions in the courts.

Nevertheless the cover-up proceeded. On 24 January 1995, after Peter Preston, then editor of the *Guardian*, gave evidence about the Ritz freebie, Tory MP Dudley Fishburn moved that the committee had heard enough and should come at once to its conclusion. A row broke out, lasting five hours. Eventually, Labour MP Angela Eagle moved that the committee should take evidence from Mohamed Fayed and Neil Hamilton, and then "consider whether to call Mr Greer".

At once Sir Anthony Durant, Tory MP for Reading West, moved an amendment to delete the references to Fayed and Greer. Somehow Sir Anthony forgot to mention that his constituency party had, eight years previously, received a donation from Ian Greer Associates. He did not feel obliged to withdraw from the vote on his amendment, which was carried by six votes to five. The other Tory MPs voting for the cover-up were Dame Peggy Fenner; Andrew Mitchell; James Clappison — who the previous year had been briefed by Ian Greer as part of his client's campaign to knock out a private member's bill banning tobacco advertising — and the Ulster Unionist whip William Ross.

Mitchell Jnr's job was now becoming awkward. The cover-up conspiracy was becoming so obvious that Peter Griffiths, ultra-loyal Tory MP for Portsmouth North, was abstaining on crucial votes. On 16 May, Angela Eagle moved "that the committee reverse their decision of 24 January which separated into two parts the complaint against Mr Neil Hamilton and proceed to consider the consolidated complaint in one report".

As the MPs divided on this motion, young whip Mitchell nearly had a fit. Peter Griffiths, the Tory, was voting with the five Labour MPs, making six for a proper investigation. There were only six left to toe the Tory line: the Ulster Unionist Ross, plus Clappison, Fenner, Fishburn, Mitchell — and Iain Duncan Smith, who had just joined the committee, so probably had not had time to tell anyone he had been a guest at one of Ian Greer's delicious 1994 dinners on behalf of tobacco giant Philip Morris (see last *Eye*).

Six for, six against. Step forward the committee's Tory chairman, Sir Geoffrey Johnson Smith, whose casting vote went with his party. The cover-up was secure. The Labour MPs walked out of the committee. Because the proceedings had been in secret, they could not publicise their reasons or their indignation. The Tories' report duly criticised Hamilton for being "imprudent" in not declaring his Ritz visit and the storm was over.

The cover-up completed, Andrew Mitchell quickly left the committee — on 17 July 1995. After the Nolan commission report, the committee was dissolved and replaced by the privileges and standards committee, a prominent member of which is Sir David Mitchell, Andrew's father. If the behaviour of the Tory whips in securing the cover-up — and the even more important question whether the prime minister or the then chief whip Richard Ryder inspired that behaviour — now comes before the committee, Sir David will be sitting in judgement not only over his prime minister, his former chief whip and his party — but also his son.

DADDIES SAUCE

■ **THE HAMILTON affair is not the first controversy to unite Mitchell & Son.**

In September 1986, the department of transport awarded a concession to the Tory party's favourite construction company, Trafalgar House, to build a bridge over the Thames as part of the M25 at Dartford. Long-standing readers of the *Eye* will recall that the concession was controversial. Trafalgar House was the only bidder to propose a bridge. All the other competitors had bid for a tunnel. Thus when the government plumped for a bridge, the only contender was Trafalgar House.

The news caused delight at the City offices of Lazards, the merchant bank, which was advising Trafalgar House. It was conveyed by one of Lazards' most promising young executives... one Andrew Mitchell. He burst into the big open-plan offices at Lazards and shouted: "We've got it! We've got it!" A huge cheer went up as delighted Lazards slickers crowded round young Mitchell to ask how he knew the good news. "Easy," he grinned. "I rang Daddy, and he told me." "Daddy", of course, was David Mitchell, minister for roads at the department of transport during the long negotiations about the Dartford tunnel, who had just been promoted to minister of state.

THE QATARSNIPE

■ **THREE firms — British Aerospace, Shorts and Vosper Thorneycroft — were named on 20 November by defence secretary Michael Portillo as beneficiaries of a huge £500 million British arms sale to the small gulf dictatorship of Qatar. What have they got in common?**

1. They are all rich arms firms.

2. They all hire David Mellor MP as a consultant. He won't declare how much he gets from any of them because, he says, his consultancies have nothing to do with his work as an MP. But he is passionately opposed to the sale of hand guns, even when they are manufactured by a subsidiary of his paymasters, British Aerospace.

CLAIMALOT

CAMELOT, the monopoly which runs the national lottery, has sent out yet more expensive PR guff announcing a new charity called the Camelot Foundation.

This is Camelot's response to the Commons heritage select committee, which was so shocked at Camelot's disgusting profits that it recommended some of them should go to charity. The foundation, boasts Camelot, "has been allocated an initial sum of £5m for its first year". The money will go to "to help disabled and disadvantaged people play a fuller part in the workplace and community".

Camelot also points out that last year it spent £1.57 million on "charitable activities". But before you burst into tears of appreciation, you should know the following facts.

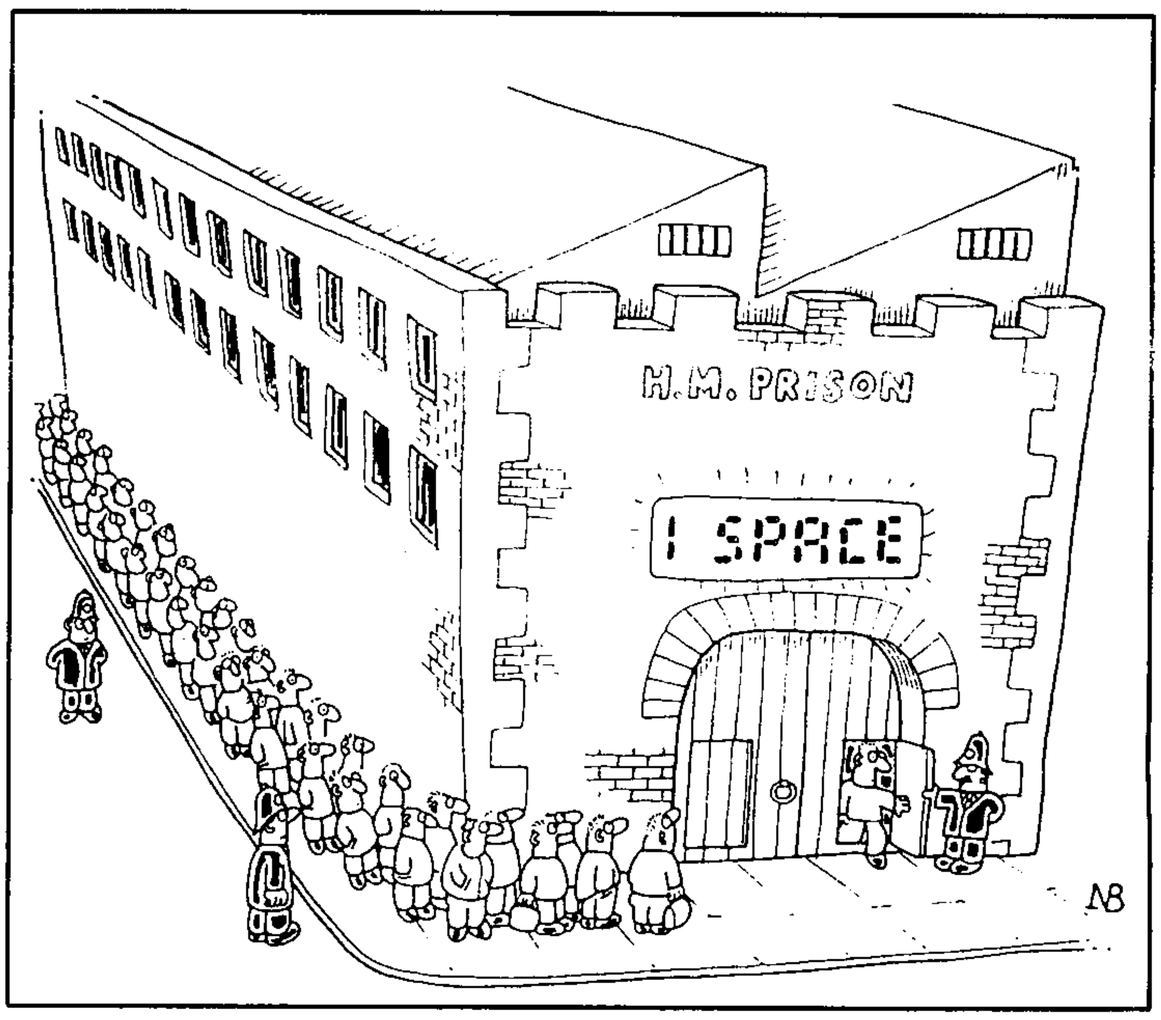
1) Camelot ihas no competitor.

2) After two years, and after paying tax, Camelot has stuffed in the bank "accumulative retained funds" of £658 million.

3) Camelot chief executive Tim Holley pays himself a package of nearly half a million pounds a year.

4) The latest report of the National Lottery Consumer Research Council, sponsored by the National Council of Voluntary Organisations, reports that compared with November 1994, when the lottery started, the percentage of the population buying charity raffle tickets has fallen from 30 to 14, and the percentage donating to street collections from 29 to 25. It concludes: "Based upon the 1993 Individual Giving Survey, the loss represents a fall of £286m per annum. This will mean that even after the allocation of lottery proceeds available to the National Lottery Charities Board — at current sales rates about £245m a year — charities face a loss of £31m per annum."

In other words, if Camelot directors multiplied their charity contribution by five times, they would just about make up for the shortfall of charity money for which their lottery is responsible.



Notts Counting

■ IF YOU want to understand the government's prison policy, read the new home office contract for Trafalgar House (who else?) to build yet another private prison at Lowdham Grange, Notts.

The contract's schedule F sets out the "performance measures" which can lead to financial penalties for the operators, Premier Prisons — half-owned by the American prison company Wackenhut, half by Serco.

The worst that can happen is an escape. This loses the firm 75 points and a penalty of £50,000. A "key/lock compromise" loses 50 points. "Release in error" loses 20. Serious injury inflicted in an assault on a warder or another prisoner also loses 50, but an ordinary assault only loses five, as does a case of hostage taking. On the other hand, any "incident of self-harm", including suicide, loses only one point. So does a failure to provide medical services or meals. Failure to respond to a prisoner's complaint loses only half a point.

Points accumulate quarterly until they reach a "reasonable level". Over that level, Premier Prisons is fined 0.001percent of the contract price per point lost. However big the score the firm can't be fined more than 5 percent of the contract price.

AYLING ECONOMY:

Spot the difference

■ ANNOUNCING pre-tax profits of £470 million for the six months to 30 September, British Airways chief executive Robert Ayling "paid tribute to the efforts of employees who, he said, continue to perform to the highest standards throughout the worldwide network".
British Airways News, 8 November 1996.

■ "British Airways plans to move 200 accounting jobs to India as part of its £1bn cost-cutting programme. Computer technology makes the switch to Bombay feasible, where wages are 80 percent less than in London. 'We can get very high calibre people for 20 per cent of what it costs in the UK,' said Derek Stevens, BA's chief financial officer."
Skyport (Heathrow and Gatwick staff newspaper), 8 November 1996.

HATCH 22

■ FIRST signs of trouble for newly-elected US president Bill Clinton came from a speech on 17 November by the chairman of the senate judiciary committee, Utah senator Orrin Hatch.

Hatch accused Clinton of launching "attack dogs" to smear the prosecutor over the Whitewater land deals with which the Clintons have been linked. Senator Hatch also warned that he would use the Republican majority in the senate "to insure that President Clinton does not pack the judiciary with liberal activists who will make mincemeat of the constitution and laws".

None of this will cause much despondency in the White House, whose spokesmen are likely to remind the nation of Senator Hatch's role as a lobbyist for the corrupt bank BCCI. On 22 February 1990, Hatch made a ringing speech in the senate defending the rotten plea bargain BCCI had made with the US justice department, and attacking further moves against BCCI being recommended by Senator John Kerry.

The speech was warmly praised by BCCI's Swaleh Naqvi, who wrote to Hatch congratulating him. Two weeks later, Hatch asked Naqvi to lend Hatch's friend and business partner Monzer Hourani $10 million. In 1992, it was revealed that at the height of the BCCI crisis, Hatch had called a justice department official and encouraged him to lobby on behalf of the bank (Dean Bacquet and Jeff Gerth: "Lawmaker's Defense of BCCI went beyond speech in Senate", *New York Times*, 26 August 1992.) Whether such an approach made mincemeat of the constitution and laws is open to interpretation.

ORRIN HATCH

BAA, HUMBUG!

■ "SECURITY for costs" is a useful device for a big company which wants to protect itself from legal action by a small company, as BAA plc (the former British Airports Authority) has discovered in its legal battle to fend off a small outdoor pursuits company called Danemark.

From 1989, Danemark provided instructors and training at BAA's management centre near Gatwick. In 1992, a new management team took over BAA and its training manager, Colin Wallace, was made redundant. Wallace believes this redundancy was connected to his public campaign to quash a manslaughter conviction from which he has recently been cleared. Danemark, which had worked closely with Wallace, was also kicked out by BAA. It sued for the money it says it was owed under contract (about £300,000). BAA denied it ever had a contract and denounced the written contract produced by Danemark as a forgery.

The case first came to court in June 1993 when BAA demanded "security for costs". Master Murray at the high court ordered the Danemark directors to put up £15,000 before the case could go ahead. The directors scraped up the money. In January 1995, the figure was put up to £37,500, and again the money was found.

That still wasn't enough for BAA, whose expensive City lawyers, Herbert Smith, went to court yet again to ask for more "security of costs": of £112,500. This was granted by Judge Rivlin. The Danemark directors couldn't possibly find that much, so they went to the court of appeal. On 16 October this year, Lord Justice Phillips and Mr Justice Mummery found for Danemark. They said that to demand such a huge sum of "security for costs" would be to "stifle the action". BAA still won't allow the case to be heard. It has petitioned the House of Lords for an order for the £112,500. Watch this space.

You can write to Paul Foot at 6 Carlisle Street, London W1V 5RG, or leave a message for him on 0171 287 3183

In the City

TWO years after helping to win the national lottery contract for Camelot, luck has finally run out for its key American player, GTECH.

For the first time a senior employee of the company that so generously entertained lottery regulator Peter Davis has been convicted of illegal activity in pursuing business for the world's biggest lottery operator.

Last month GTECH's former national sales manager, J. David Smith, was convicted in a New Jersey court of taking kickbacks from consultants hired by GTECH when it was bidding to run the state lottery. GTECH was not charged.

A previous prosecution of Smith in Kentucky was dismissed. But the federal authorities are said to be continuing to probe Smith's activities for GTECH before he resigned in 1994. Not surprising: it also emerged that he had been paid a kickback by a politically well connected GTECH consultant in Texas.

Smith was convicted of arranging for kickbacks totalling at least $169,000 from a consultancy firm paid $739,000 by GTECH. A relative of one of the two consultants was an aide to the New Jersey governor. The defence suggested the fees had been deliberately inflated in order to obtain influence.

During the trial it emerged that GTECH spends $20 million a year on lobbyists and consultants. GTECH chief executive Guy Snowden testified that Smith had been vital to the company's success in winning state lottery contracts. Snowden — due in a British libel court with defeated lottery bidder Richard Branson over allegations that he tried to bribe the talking pullover — admitted that Smith had arranged to receive a third of a payment made to the former lieutenant governor of Texas who was a GTECH consultant.

When giving evidence to the Commons public accounts committee (PAC) almost a year ago, Davis, director-general of the lottery regulator Oflot, admitted he was aware of GTECH's "dodgy practices" including the two prosecutions of Smith. Davis took free flights on a GTECH corporate jet and helicopter while in the US before Camelot was awarded the national lottery contract. GTECH is a major Camelot shareholder and provides the lottery expertise in return for 22.5 percent of the £18.5 million in dividends to date.

As one of Smith's co-defendants' lawyers declared during the trial, companies like GTECH are always "looking for access".

INVESTING in the opposite direction across the Atlantic, Ladbroke may have bought itself a load of trouble with its $25 (£17) million purchase of a stake in the Bicycle Club casino near Los Angeles earlier this year.

Ladbroke bought a one-third interest from the US government which had been desperately looking to sell ever since it acquired the stake in 1990 as a result of convicting the major drug traffickers who financed the building of the casino — so keen indeed that the US Marshalls Service accepted $13 million less than in an abortive deal two years ago.

That eagerness to sell is easily explained. While under federal auspices the Bicycle Club was the target of several investigations over alleged involvement by Asian organised crime in its highly profitable card games. The former senior manager and another employee were convicted of loan sharking and extortion.

The casino in Bell Gardens relies heavily on the large numbers of Chinese and Vietnamese living south of Los Angeles. This resulted in repeated allegations of involvement with Hong Kong and Taiwanese triad gangs. The casino was also fined by the US tax authorities for money laundering.

If Uncle Sam was unable to control Asian organised crime groups operating in the Bicycle Club, can Ladbroke's 6,000 miles away do any better? Perhaps not the best buy for a company still seeking to shed the memories of its lost London casino licences.

ONE of the drug runners who pumped $12 million into the Bicycle Club was a very good customer of banks in the Channel Islands. And Jersey remains a haven of choice for some of the world's more unsavoury customers.

So concerned have the Jersey authorities become that even before the recent Banque Cantrade fraud prosecution, a secret investigation had been launched into suspect companies registered on the septic isle. The report was handed to those responsible for the Commercial Relations Office, which oversees (sick) local companies, some weeks ago. It is understood to identify up to 30 companies linked with possible money laundering or other criminal activities. Exactly what the Jersey watchdogs in Sleepy Hollow will do with this unwelcome information is awaited with interest.

FORMER England football coach Terry Venables may face more testing opposition nearer home next year than he can expect with either Australia's world cup hopefuls or Portsmouth. The Department of Timidity & Inaction still has a fixture booked with El Tel in its bid to disqualify him as a director over certain of his less successful previous business outings.

A trial date is expected to be set at a court hearing due next month. The matter was patriotically put on hold so as not to interfere with Venables and England's Euro 96 ambitions. But now the judges are expected to wave play on and the chances of a result for El Tel are far from good.

Few have beaten the DTI in court on a disqualification rap. But in a game of "reformed" drug takers, alcoholics, gamblers, wife beaters and convicted thugs, such a conviction barely justifies the yellow card.

IT SEEMS a major clear-out of senior suits at Nat West may be on the way following its acquisition of corporate finance boutique J.O. Hambro Magan. Insiders report George Magan and his team have not been greatly impressed by the quality of Nat West's existing takeover and deal-making talent.

Nat West's offer came at a time when strains were beginning to show in the relationship between Magan and co-founder Rupert Hambro, who has been left outside to run his own smaller show. Now Magan is expected to start making sure he retains his role as the City's number one dealmaker as well as earning more by selling out to the high street bank than he would have done remaining independent.

"I AM in fact a resident of Surrey and I pay taxes in the UK", declared the Referendum party's supreme leader Sir James Goldsmith (*Mail on Sunday*, 22 September), keen to refute suggestions from political opponents that his many homes, dual nationality and offshore foundations somehow indicate he may not be making an appropriate contribution. However, before the voters of Putney thank Goldsmith for his generosity, they would do well to ask — what taxes, on what and how much?

With a mansion in Ham available for his use Goldsmith would have always had difficulty in avoiding being classed as "resident" for UK tax purposes. But he may well not be "ordinarily resident" because of the time he spends at his hacienda in Mexico, which is usually listed as his residence, or elsewhere abroad. And if so that would mean he could only face income tax on that part of his income or assets remitted to Britain for his personal use, not his more substantial worldwide income or capital gains.

Given that Ormeley Lodge is rented to his wife by an offshore company, just how much Goldsmith needs and remits here is open to debate. As is how much money is required and from where for his personal expenses in Britain. The Revenue is presumably satisfied there is no personal benefit from the funding Goldsmith provides to the Referendum party, itself a limited company. Goldsmith lists no other business interests here.

As his father was not born in Britain and neither was the great democrat, it is unlikely Goldsmith is considered "domiciled" in Britain for tax purposes. So that would mean no inheritance tax threat to the safely offshore fortune of this unselfish patriot.

And as his Ham home is owned by a company, it may even be open to doubt as to whether he, Lady Annabel or the company pays this year's council tax bill of £1,424.

"Let the people decide" is the Referendum party slogan. Perhaps Goldsmith should reveal the details to enable Putney voters to make a similar judgement on his taxpaying status. Or maybe not!

'Slicker'

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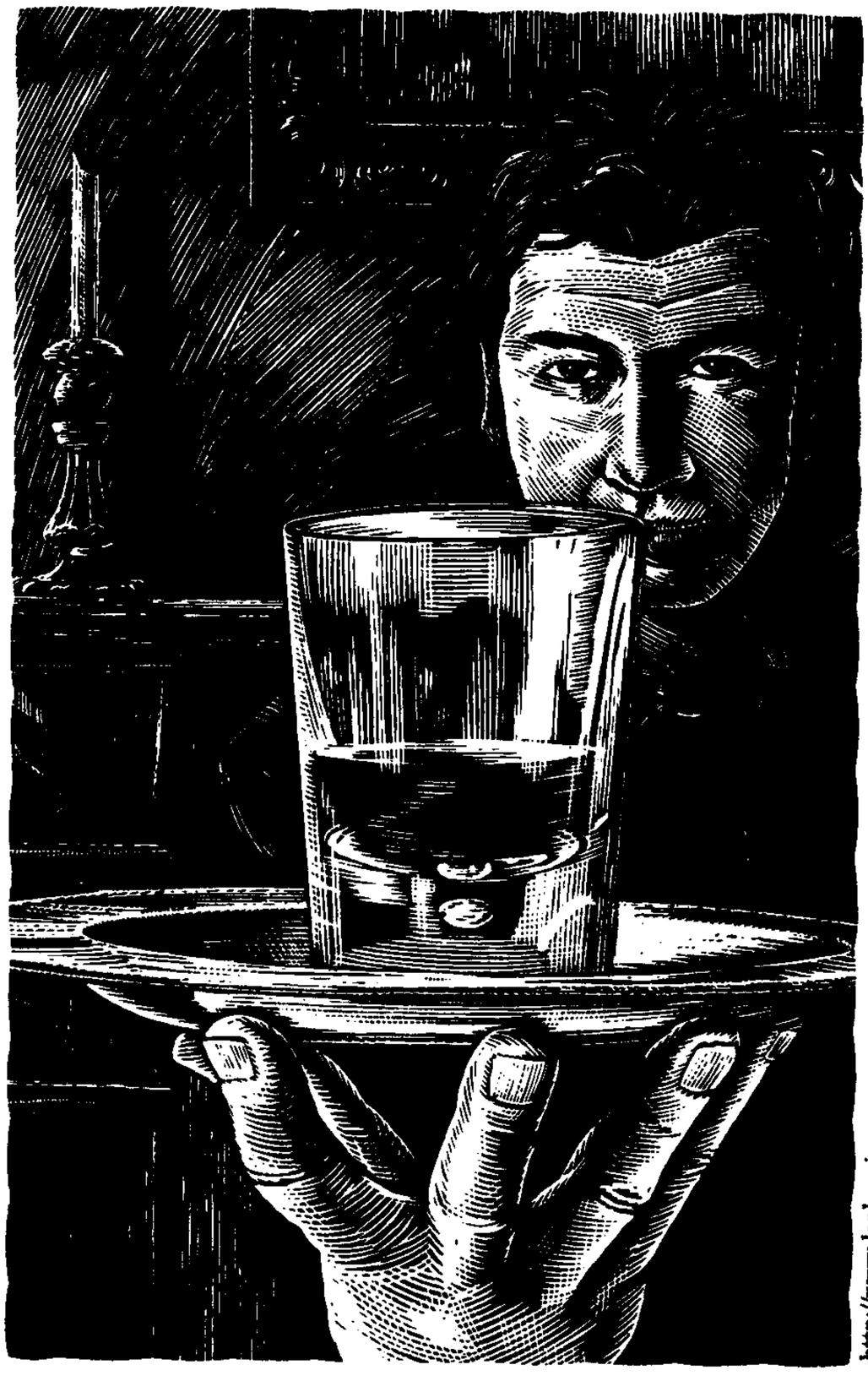

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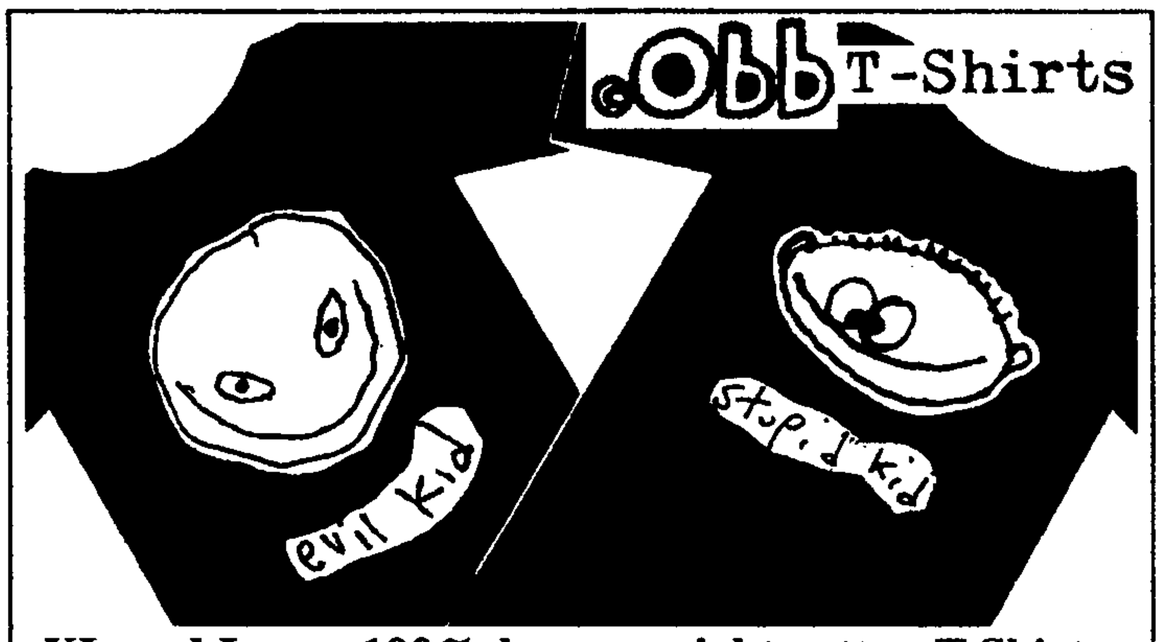

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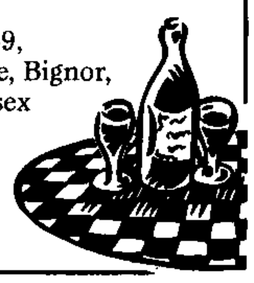

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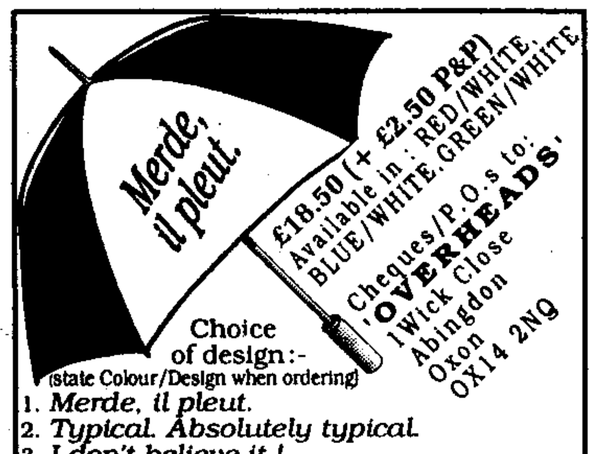

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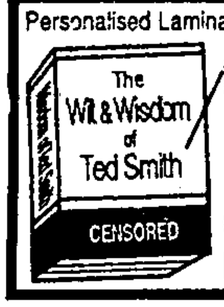

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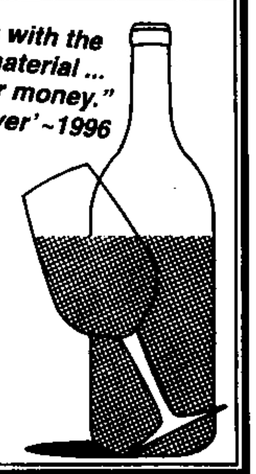

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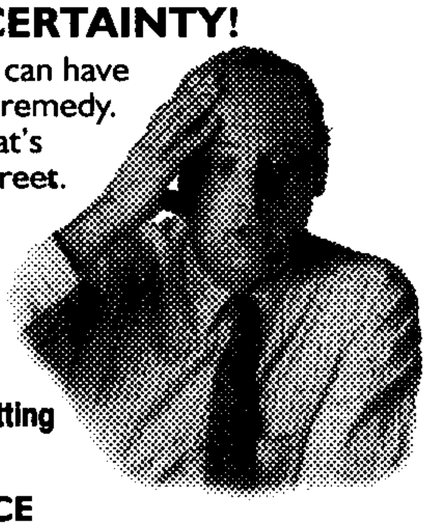

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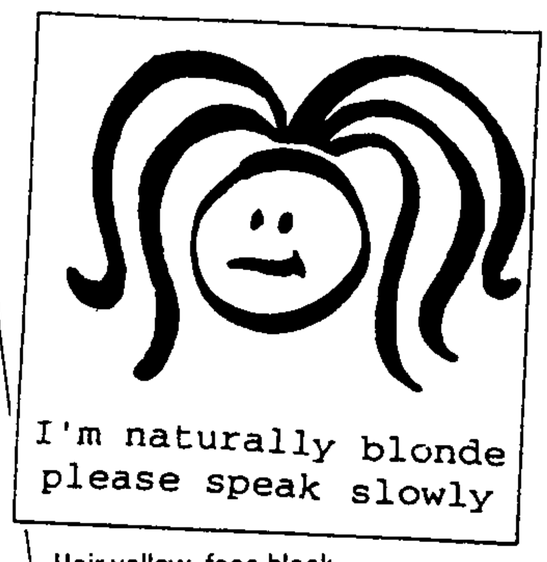

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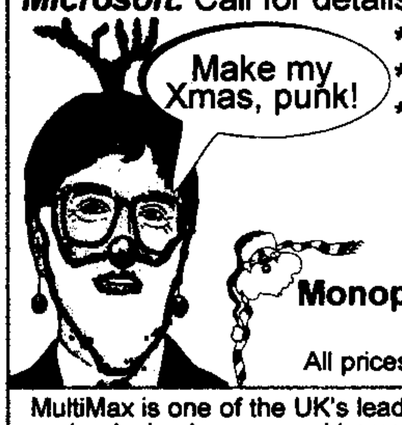

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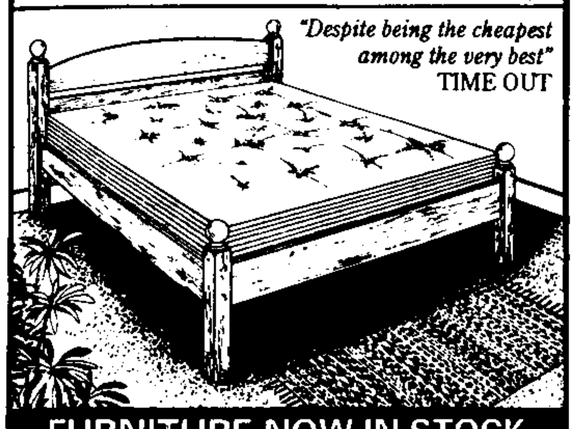

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